

A Muslim Commentary of the Bible

Matthew - Mark - Luke - John

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Vol 1

**This is a Qadiani Book.
Only use for looking at getting
more information on the 4 Gospels.**

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Notes on Reading this Book

Aim/Goal of this Commentary

The aim of this book is to examine what happened in Jesus' life and what he said according to the four gospels. To figure this out, we take a strong Historical Critical approach, along with two other interpretation techniques: *Source Criticism* (finding out the source of the author of the gospel); and *Redaction Criticism* (once they had their source, what did the authors change and why?).

The views and interpretation of the verses of the gospels are predominantly founded and built upon the writings and teachings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him). Without his guidance, none of this work would be possible.

Textual Variants

In certain places, you will notice the heading of **Textual Variant**. These are variants in the Greek text and ancient biblical manuscripts (see Chapter 3: Introduction to the Biblical Manuscripts below). Variants are *differences* in the Bible manuscripts, where Christian scribes have edited the text.

There are thousands of variants in biblical manuscripts; the vast majority of which are simple scribal errors, since recreating a manuscript hundreds of years ago entailed a scribe to copy another manuscript by hand. It was a painstaking process which led to errors.. These errors were mainly innocent and well...human. These have not been outlined in this work.

However, there are many variants which are not errors, but are *intentional*: where a scribe makes a change to the text *deliberately* to support his beliefs. He may remove certain verses or words of Jesus because it goes against his understanding of the Christian belief. These types of Textual Variants, presented in this work, are very interesting and show us that the Bible has been edited/changed over time.

The Translation/Important Words

The translation of the text is from World English Bible (WEB) to avoid copyright issues. The translation is based on the American Standard version, which is based on the King James Version which is based on the Received Text edition of the Greek New Testament. This admittedly is problematic as I explain in the Introduction to Biblical Manuscripts section below. However, wherever there is a problem with the text, whether it is a translation of a word or sentence, I highlight it in the **Important Words** sections.

In these sections, I *parse* (break down) the Greek word to give the reader the breakdown of the word, its root, what number, gender, tense etc. the word is in. Readers wanting to know more can read *The Elements of New Testament Greek* by Jeremy Duff in 2005.

As there are many forms of the word, a small breakdown may be worth mentioning:

Nouns have a Gender, Case and Number. The Gender is Masculine, Feminine and Neuter.

The Number is Singular or Plural.

The Case is a bit more complex and is broken down below:

- **Nominative:** The subject of the verb.
- **Accusative:** The object of the verb.
- **Genitive:** The case of possession, equivalent to the English *of*.
- **Dative:** Generally the noun to which something is given, equivalent to the English *to, or, at or with*.

Verbs are more complex; they have a Person, Number, Tense, Voice and Mood.

- **Person:** 1st Person being *I/we*; 2nd person being *you*; and 3rd person being *he/she/it/they*.
- **Number:** Singular or plural.
- **Tense:** Present, Future, Imperfect, Aorist, Perfect and Pluperfect.
- **Voice:** Active or Passive.
- **Mood:** Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive or Participle.

Much of the above is self-explanatory, however within the Tense breakdown, it may not be clear what the difference is between the Imperfect and the Aorist. Both tenses are in the past, but the Imperfect denotes a continuous past action while the Aorist is a one off, e.g.

1. The Angel was punching the man.
2. The Angel punched the man.

Both the above sentences are in the past tense. In the first sentence the verb *punch* is in the Imperfect as it denotes a continuous action, i.e. the Angel punched the man more than once and may be punching him even now. Meanwhile, in the second sentence, the verb is in the Aorist, denoting that the Angel punched the man just once and has now ceased punching him. This is important as many Bible translations do not clearly illustrate the difference in English, but where it is important, I highlight it.

The Perfect and Pluperfect are also past tenses, but differ from Imperfect and Aorist in that they denote a past action being completed in the past:

1. The Angel has broken the man's nose.
2. The Angel had broken the man's nose.

Both of the sentences are in the past, but differ in the present. The verb in the first sentence is in the Perfect tense, since it denotes a past action with a present effect; the Angel broke the man's nose and it is still broken. Meanwhile, the verb in the second sentence is in the Pluperfect tense, since the effect is no longer in the present. The man's nose is now fixed and no longer broken. Again, this is important and will be reflected in the translation in this book.

The other point worth mentioning is the difference between the past tense verbs and the past tense participles. The latter denotes an action still occurring or completed:

1. While the Angel was punching the man...
2. Having punched the man, the Angel... or After the Angel punched the man, the Angel...

The verb in the first sentence is a Present Participle and the second sentence is in the Aorist.

Respect for the Prophets of God

Prophets are spoken about through-out this commentary and I often profess respect for them by a blessing, such as *peace be upon him* or in the case of the blessed Prophet Muhammad, I will add *peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*. When it comes to Jesus, I hold the same respect and love, but due to the sheer number of times I write his name, I chose to omit any blessings. But readers should be aware that I love him and dearly pray and bless him, like all Muslims around the world.

Verses Numbers in Quranic References

When it comes to quotations from the Holy Quran, I am using the translation done by Maulvi Sher Ali. Readers will notice that the verse numbers are +1 when compared to many other translations of the Holy Quran around the world, i.e. the following verse:

Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you and forgive you your faults. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.'

It's reference in this book is Chapter 3, verse 32. However, in some other translations of the Quran, the reference would be verse 31. This is because the Maulvi Sher Ali translation counts *Bismillah* as the first verse of every sura.

This should cause no alarm, since numerous scholars of the past agreed with this numbering, e.g. Imam Shafi'ee and Imam Ahmad; both argued that the copies of the Holy Quran which were written under the guidance of the third Khalifa of Islam contained *Bismillah* at the beginning of every chapter.

Some of the Quran scholars too agreed; among the Qarees, Ibn Kathir, Aasim and al-Kisaa'ee considered *Bismillah* to be a verse at the beginning of each Chapter.^[1]

For further details, refer to notes written under Chapter 1, verse 1 in *The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary* written by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).

The Four Canonical Gospels

What are the gospels? These are documents which were written by Christians decades after Jesus departed Jerusalem. There were many gospels which were written, but only four were chosen as 'inspired' by later Christians. The criteria for choosing these four are rather ambiguous, one early Church Father in the second century gave his reasons:

"There are four gospels and only four, neither more nor less: four like the points of the compass, four like the chief directions of the wind. The Church, spread all over the world, has in the gospels four pillars and four winds blowing wherever people live."^[2]

In truth, the gospels seemed to have been chosen due to their popularity more than anything else. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John became popular amongst the early Churches and therefore were considered canonical.

The first three: Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as the *Synoptic* gospels; they are called such, as they can be studied side by side in a Synopsis (seeing together) fashion. The Synoptic gospels differ from the fourth Gospel of John, as shall be seen later in this study.

In the Synoptic gospels (first three), the main focus of Jesus' mission was to preach to the Jews, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God, and to give basic religious instruction. He was a Prophet from the region of Galilee, who wandered the countryside preaching, and finally visited Jerusalem where he was subsequently arrested and sentenced to death.

Contrary to popular belief, the gospels were not historical documents written for the preservation of history. Rather, they were documents written for the propagation of the Church, or rather Churches. It aided them in their preaching. Each author had his own agenda, depending on which of the two main Churches he belonged to.

It has been generally agreed upon by scholars that there were in fact two *types* of Churches immediately after Jesus left: The *Pauline* and *Petrine* Churches. The former consisted of the followers of the Apostle Paul who freely admitted Gentiles (non-Jews) into the community without them having to convert to Judaism or follow the Torah. Whilst the latter, the Petrine Church, was completely Jewish and would not have accepted Gentiles, but rather would have had them convert to Judaism.^[3]

With regards to the actual authorship of these gospels it is not so clear-cut: I will analyse the authorship of the gospels below; much of the following analysis being taken from *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* by E.P. Sanders and Margaret Davies.

Authors of the Gospels

There is no degree of certainty as to who the authors of the Synoptics are, a famous scholar Bart Ehrman states:

“Even though we continue to call the gospels “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,” we do not know who the authors actually were. Each of the Gospels is completely anonymous: their authors never announce their names. The titles we read in the Gospels (e.g., “The Gospel According to Matthew”) were not put there by their authors, but by later scribes who wanted to tell you who, in their opinion, wrote these books. But for well over a century scholars have realized that these opinions are almost certainly wrong. The followers of Jesus were uneducated, lower-class, Aramaic-speaking peasants from rural Galilee; these books, however, were written by highly educated and well trained, Greek-speaking, elite Christians living in cities in other locations. They were not eyewitnesses to the events they describe, and do not ever claim to be.” ^[4]

Therefore, like many of the books of the Old Testament, the gospels, too, were written anonymously.^[5]

To prove the case, we have to find the earliest mentions of the gospels. The earliest Christian author who displays knowledge of all four gospels is Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons who lived around 180 CE. He wrote a book *Against Heresies* where he named all four gospels in Book 3 of his work (3.11.7). He also quoted passages from the same text as Luke which we have now (Luke 1.2 quoted in 3.14.2), and the same opening of Matthew (3.16.2) and Mark 3.16.3) are also quoted. This is about 150 years after Jesus.

Prior to Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, around 150 CE, writes and quotes from what he calls *The Memoirs of the Apostles*. His quotes are mainly a mixture of passages of Matthew and Luke (Justin, Apology, 1.19.7). He did not name any authors of the gospels, and when he did quote *The Memoirs of the Apostles*, they were a mixture of Matthew and Luke. It seems he had access to only those two gospels, but two problems exist: why did he frequently mix the passages? And why didn't he just name Matthew or Luke when quoting them?

In fact, the most common method of quoting gospel material is seen in the writing of Clement of Rome, around 90 CE:

“Above all, remember the words of the Lord Jesus, which he uttered while teaching forbearance and patience. ‘Be merciful, that you may receive mercy. Forgive, that forgiveness may be given to you; as you do, so it shall be done to you; as you give, so shall it be given you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you show kindness, so will kindness be shown to you; the measure you give will be the measure you get’.”^[6]

The above quote is a mixture of Matt 5:7, 6:14-15, 6:15, 7:1-2, 7:12; Mark 11:25; and Luke 6:31, 6:36-38, all of which is simply assigned to the Lord Jesus. From the late first century to the mid-second, gospel material was quoted without naming the authors, which implies that they were most likely written anonymously.

Passages from the Gospel of John are quoted even later, and regarding its content, it is rather clear that we are dealing with a highly evolved piece of work in which the present doctrines of Christianity were beginning to develop. It was probably written or compiled much later than the Synoptics. The whole structure of

this gospel is different from the other gospels, and the Jesus portrayed in this gospel is someone completely different. The Jesus in this gospel focuses mainly on himself, rather than God. The doctrine of Atonement is essential in this gospel as is Jesus' heavenly origin.

The Synoptic gospels record Jesus making short statements and talking in parables to large crowds, whilst in the Gospel of John Jesus is portrayed as composing long lectures describing his own relationship with God, and how different he himself is from the rest of humanity. In the Gospel of John, there is no bread and wine in the Last Supper, instead Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. There is no trial in front of the Sanhedrin, but only questioning by Annas the father-in-law of Caiaphas the High Priest. The list of differences can go on and on, and will be shown fully in the work below.

The Sources Used by the Authors

If the original writers of the gospels weren't eye-witnesses, where did they get their information from? Bart Erhman continues:

“Where then did they (the writers of the gospels) get their stories? This is the second point to stress. For nearly 100 years scholars have realized that the gospel writers acquired their stories about Jesus from the ‘oral tradition’, that is, from the stories about Jesus’s life, words, deeds, death, and resurrection that had been in circulation by word of mouth, in all the years from the time of his death. The gospels were written between 70–95 CE — that is 40 to 65 years after the events they narrate. This means that the gospel writers are recording stories that had been told and retold month after month, year after year, decade after decade, among Christians living throughout the Roman Empire, in differing places, in different times, even in different languages.” [7]

It went like this: Jesus taught the disciples many things, after he departed from Jerusalem, to preach to the remaining Jews to the east; the disciples, too, preached his message and expanded the Church. They would remember his message and convey it to others who would then join the Church. The new members would then convey the message to their own families and friends who also would convert. They in turn would convey the message to their own families, friends, business partners etc., and then these would also convey the message, and so on. As Erhman explains, this process would go on for decades until someone had the bright idea of writing them down. This became the Gospel of Mark.

A decade after Mark's gospel was written, another Christian thought to write his own gospel. He had access to the Gospel of Mark, along with other traditions which Mark had not written. This became the Gospel of Matthew.

Another Christian, a little later, also had access to Mark's Gospel and other traditions. He, too, thought to write his own gospel. This became the Gospel of Luke.

Finally, decades later, another Christian thought to write his own gospel, independent of the other gospels, and this became the Gospel of John.

I explain each gospel in a lot more detail in the next section.

Authorship of the Gospel of Mark

The author of this gospel is traditionally said to be John Mark who is mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 12:12, 25, 13:5, 13, 15:37; Colossians 4:10; and 1 Peter 5:13 as the *son of Peter* (Peter was one of the chief disciples of Jesus, see under Mark 1:16 for more details), which may have led early Christian scholars and writers to attribute it to an interpreter or disciple of Peter in Rome.

Irenaeus, a Greek bishop who lived in the second century CE, said that Mark was written after Peter and Paul's departure from Rome, which he interprets as their deaths.^[8] This would have occurred around 64 CE since both died during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero.

A little earlier than Irenaeus, in 120 CE, Bishop Papias is quoted by Eusebius, a Church historian:

Papias tells us: "This too, the presbyter used to say. 'Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he had remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter's. Peter used to adapt his teachings to the occasion, without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord's saying, so that Mark was quite justified in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only – to leave out nothing that he had heard, and to make no misstatement about it'".^[9]

Papias seems to be the first person to actually assign names to the gospels; he writes about Matthew and Mark. But the question arises, was Papias talking about the same Matthew and Mark as in the present day Bible?

Furthermore, who is the *presbyter* Papias is referring to? Many scholars believe that the first sentence above – 'Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he had remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings' belongs to the presbyter while the remaining is Papias' own commentary.

Papias writes that the Gospel of Mark was not written in any order, yet the gospel in our possession now is clearly written as a narrative (an orderly story). This implies that either a scribe later modified the Gospel of Mark, placing it all in order, or more likely that Papias was actually referring to another version of Mark, which is now lost.

Finally, the writings of Papias have not survived, they have been quoted by a later Church historian Eusebius, whose opinion on Papias is... interesting. In the same page as the quote mentioned above (Book 3, Ch 39.15), Eusebius criticises Papias for his lack of intelligence, calling him "a man of very small intelligence". This then is the man who gives us the *only* information of the origin of the Gospel of Mark.

As to the purpose of the gospel and its audience, there are a variety of views amongst the scholars. A significant number argue that the gospel was written for (1) the majority Gentile Christian community in Rome. The famous scholar Hengel argues that Mark was written at a clear geographical distance from Palestine;

numerous words and passages point to an origin in Rome.^[10] (2) The other growing opinion is that it was written in Palestine; scholar Marcus argues extensively against the Roman view, coming to the conclusion that a likely place may have been Pella.^[11] (3) Finally, there are those scholars who argue against both opinions above, stating that it was written for a larger and more general Christian community.^[12]

Naming of the Gospel

If the Gospel of Mark was written anonymously, how did it get 'assigned' to Mark? This would have happened in the second or third century when Church leaders had a gospel but with no name. Now, it was known from the days of Papias (see above) that Peter's close companion had written Jesus' account. The church leaders would have wanted to assign it to Peter, but couldn't since by then a gospel of Peter already existed which was read by some Christian heretics. So it was easier for them to assign 'Peter's real' account to the gospel they had; namely, that of Mark. Now, by then, they had a gospel which was written by Paul's close companion (Luke, see below) and another gospel written by Peter's close companion. For more detail, see *Jesus before the Gospels*, written by Bart Ehrman (p.125-128).

Manuscript Evidence

The earliest manuscript found to contain the Gospel of Mark is the P. Chester Beatty I, otherwise known as P⁴⁵. Some 20-30 verses of this gospel are found in this manuscript. The manuscript is currently housed in Dublin, Ireland: Chester Beatty Collection and is dated to the *early third century CE*.^[13]

There are no other second or third century manuscripts containing the Gospel of Mark. However, a full version of this gospel is found in the Codex Sinaiticus, which is dated to the *mid-fourth century CE*.

Overview of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark, which is considered by most scholars to be the first one written from the Canonical (the four gospels in the present day Bible) gospels, is said to have been written during the Jewish rebellion against Rome in 66-70 CE. It is the shortest of the four gospels, and believed to be one of the sources of Matthew and Luke: in that these two later writers had the Gospel of Mark in front of them while writing their own gospels, and added more details to it from another unknown source named 'Q' (from the German *quelle* meaning *source*).

Mark's Gospel contains no details of Jesus' infancy, but begins with the proclamations of John the Baptist. It ends abruptly as well, with the three terrified women fleeing from the tomb. However, further verses do speak about Jesus meeting the disciples again and commissioning them to preach the gospel to the rest of the world, and that magnificent miracles/signs would accompany whoever believed in Jesus (Mark verses 9-20). However, these have been proven to be

additions to the gospel, written many centuries later; see *The Longer Ending of Mark* section at the end of Mark's Gospel.

An interesting characteristic of Mark's Gospel is that it contains more of the *human* side of Jesus; in it Jesus displays signs of emotion and ignorance. For example, before healing a leper in Mark 3:5, Jesus is moved by *pity* (or more likely *anger*, according to a Textual Variant). Luke omits the reference of the emotion (Luke 6:10) and Matthew omits the entire sentence (Matthew 12:12). Again, in Mark, when Jesus was visiting his home town Nazareth he could *do no mighty work there* (Mark 6:5). Matthew states that he could *not do many mighty works there* (Matthew 13:58), while Luke is completely silent on the topic. In Mark, Jesus displays ignorance when asking the demon its name (Mark 5:9), while nothing of the sort is recorded in Matthew or Luke. Mark's Jesus *groans* before replying to the Pharisees when asked for a sign (Mark 8:12). Both Matthew and Luke ignore the moan completely (Luke 11:16; Matthew 16:2). Finally, Jesus' relatives are reported to have said that *he is insane* (Mark 3:12), while Matthew and Luke both ignore such a statement.

However, that does not mean that this gospel should be considered to be the most authentic in the re-telling of the life of Jesus. It should be remembered that each gospel was written for a particular agenda, and the aim and objective of Mark's Gospel seems to be to convince his audience, most likely Gentiles, that they may enter the Christian Church as they are, and not follow the Torah Law; as Mark belonged to a Pauline type Church (see the beginning of this chapter for an overview of the two types of Churches in the first century CE).

One final fascinating aspect of the Gospel of Mark is that Jesus appears to go around preaching and teaching, but *intentionally* hides his true identity and the real meaning of his teachings. Whenever Jesus exorcises a demon-possessed person he strictly silences the demon who proclaims who he is (1:25, 34, 3:11-12). Whenever he heals people, he tells them not to let anyone know (1:43-44, 5:43 and 7:36). He often gives private instructions to insiders and not to the crowds such as in 7:17 and 10:10. In fact, in 4:33-34 our author Mark has Jesus only teaching the crowds in parables. Why? So that people may not understand his message! (4:10-12) Even when the disciples finally figure out who he is, he tells them not to tell anyone (8:30). Contrast this with the miracles Jesus does in John's Gospel, where he does so, so everyone may know who he is. Why the Gospel of Mark does this is debated amongst the scholars, but it definitely is a strange characteristic indeed! It's like imagining a teacher or Prophet being sent to a people and *not* teaching them, or intentionally hiding his core message! Why do that? It is safe to assume that the author Mark is not recording the events properly when attributing this strange characteristic to Jesus.

Authorship of the Gospel of Matthew

The authorship of this gospel is traditionally said to be the disciple of Jesus mentioned in Mark 3:18; Matthew 10:3; Luke 6:15; and Acts 1:13. The evidence for this is that Jesus had a disciple named Matthew... we have a Gospel According to Matthew... It must be the same man! However, there is nothing even in Church tradition to link the two.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum writes around 180 CE that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome,^[14] which initially contradicts what Bishop Papias (around 120 CE) stated: "Matthew compiled the sayings in the Aramaic language, and everyone translated them as well as he could".^[15]

Other than the above, there are no early writings attesting to the authorship of this gospel. There is nothing to say that the author Matthew was the actual disciple of Jesus. So we are left with the only alternative which is that the gospel was written anonymously. As far as the language it was written in, there may have been a version of the gospel written in Hebrew; however, the version that is present in our Bible today was most likely to have been originally written in Greek, since Greek scholars argue that the gospel does not read as a translation.

It has been argued by many scholars that the author could *not* have been the tax-collector mentioned in the gospels (Matthew 10:3). Firstly, the author never claims to be the disciple of Jesus, in fact the evidence is against this since he speaks of *Matthew* in the third person! “Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew” (Matt 9:9). Why didn’t the author say he passed by *me* and called *me*? As explained above as well, the gospel was originally written in Greek, unlike what Irenaeus and Papias state.

The author of the Gospel of Matthew also copied directly from the Gospel of Mark; this is referred to as the *Two Source Theory*; in that the author of the Gospel of Matthew, when writing his gospel had as his source the Gospel of Mark and another document commonly known as Q, along with separate traditions that he may have gained access to. Most of the Gospel of Mark is retained in the Gospel of Matthew, at times word for word in the Greek. Why would a disciple of Jesus (an eye-witness) rely on the works of someone else for something that he himself had witnessed first-hand? This along with many other reasons prove that the author was not Matthew the disciple of Jesus.^[16] With the above in mind, most scholars will date the writing of this gospel to be around the year 80CE.

Naming of the Gospel

Like the Gospel of Mark, this too was written anonymously. How did it get its name?

Bart Ehrman explains it well:

“Matthew was an obvious choice. Since the days of Papias, it had been thought that Jesus’ disciple Matthew had written a ‘Hebrew’ gospel. It came to be thought that this book must have been it. (Never mind that Papias was talking only about a list of Jesus’ sayings and that our Matthew was not written in Hebrew. Early Christians as a rule didn’t know that.) The call of Matthew the tax collector is found only in this first gospel (9:9-14), and so obviously (at least it was obvious to some people) this gospel was especially focused on Matthew. [Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32 both have the call of the tax collector to be Jesus’ disciple, but in those versions his name is Levi, not Matthew.] Moreover, the first gospel has always been seen as the most ‘Jewish’ of the gospels; if Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew, it was for Jews or for Jewish followers of Jesus. That would be this gospel. Whoever named the first gospel wanted it to be attributed to a follower of Jesus, so Matthew was an obvious choice.”^[17]

Manuscript Evidence

The earliest manuscript found to contain the Gospel of Matthew is P. Oxy. 4404, otherwise known as P¹⁰⁴. Five verses of this gospel are to be found in this manuscript which is housed in Oxford, England and is dated to the *early second century CE*.^[18]

Three passages of Matthew are to be found in the P. Barcelona 1, otherwise known as P⁶⁷. This manuscript is housed in Barcelona, Spain and is dated to the *second half of the second century CE*.^[19]

Some ten passages of Matthew are also to be found in the P. Chester Beatty I, otherwise known as P⁴⁵, currently housed in Dublin, Ireland. The Chester Beatty Collection is dated to the *early third century CE*.^[20]

Ten passages of Matthew can also be found in P. Oxy. 2, otherwise known as P¹ which is dated to the *mid- third century CE*.^[21]

The manuscript P. Oxy. 2384 + PSI Inv. CNR 419, 429, otherwise known as P⁷⁰, contains some five passages of Matthew and dates from the *late third century CE*.^[22]

There are other manuscripts which contain traces of this gospel dating from the third century. However, a full version of this gospel is found in the Codex Sinaiticus, which is dated to the *mid-fourth century CE*. It may be worth noting that the number of early manuscripts of this gospel far exceed that of the Gospel of Mark, hinting that this gospel was probably more popular amongst the early Churches.

Overview of the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is said to be the second gospel to have been written, most likely just after the First Jewish War in 70 CE. Debates on the origin of the gospel continue to this day, with most agreeing that the most likely place of composition was Antioch in Syria.

The author of the Gospel of Matthew was the first to speak of Jesus' infancy and as mentioned above, much of the Gospel of Mark is reproduced in Matthew. However, numerous modifications are made to the text in Mark to suit the needs and views of Matthew. It is generally agreed upon that Matthew was a Jewish Christian writing for a Jewish Christian Church; as such he belonged to the Petrine type Church as opposed to the Pauline Church that Mark belonged to (see the beginning of this chapter for an overview of the two types of Church in the first century CE).

Regarding Jesus' attitude towards the Jews, the Gospel of Matthew shows a great deal more concern. It contains more Jewish elements than the other gospels; more quotations are made from the Old Testament in this gospel than in the others; and the author seems to argue for a purely Jewish mission within the lifetime of Jesus, i.e. Jesus is said to have only focused on Jews and had little or no regard for Gentiles. The position of the Law is also very clear: Matthew argues that the Torah Law is to be followed in its completeness, and that in order to join his Church, one is to follow the Law and be a full Jew.

Authorship of the Gospel of Luke

The author of the Gospel of Luke is traditionally said to be the companion of Paul, as mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and is also said to be the author of the Acts of the Apostles.

Irenaeus, writing around 180 CE is the first to mention the Gospel of Luke, and he states that Luke was a companion of Paul.^[23] Prior to him, no other writer mentions him, not even Papias who mentions Matthew and Mark. When analysing the text, it is clear that the author was not an eye-witness, but was someone heavily dependent on his sources. Much like Matthew, Luke too had access to the Gospel of Mark and the Q document, but does not reproduce as much of Mark in his gospel as Matthew does. Most scholars will date Luke just after the year 80CE.

Luke's local knowledge of Palestine is rather inadequate, which has led many scholars to argue for another origin. He was very well-educated, since the Greek in Luke and Acts is very complex, consisting of a wide range of vocabulary and an imitation of classical Greek.

Again, like the above gospels, Luke's Gospel is no exception when it comes to the author; he is completely unknown. It was Irenaeus who writes around 180 CE that Luke was a companion of Paul and wrote a gospel. Prior to him, no one else is aware of such a gospel. Before Irenaeus, another bishop, Marcion (who was later declared a heretic) arrived in Rome in 140 CE with a version of the Gospel of Luke; but this was later rejected by the Church. Marcion being the son of the Bishop of Sinope may well have had access to manuscripts and documents. He may have chosen writings or sayings that he agreed with and compiled them into one document. This he brought over to Rome after he was excommunicated from his home town for his controversial views. Whether this is the original Gospel of Luke is unknown, but it is still the first mention of a Gospel of Luke.

Naming of the Gospel

Like Matthew, the author Bart Erhman explains how the name 'Luke' got assigned to the third gospel:

"The authorship of the third Gospel, Luke, is also relatively unproblematic, but for completely other reasons. The author of that book also wrote the book of Acts (read the first few verses of each book and you'll see why this has always been obvious to most people). Acts is not about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but about the spread of Christianity in the years after Jesus' ascension. The main character for most of Acts is the apostle Paul, whose missionary endeavours form the subject of a good bit of the book. Acts is told in the third person, except in four passages dealing with Paul's travels, where the author moves into a first-person narrative, indicating what 'we' were doing (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28:16). That was taken to suggest that the author of Acts – and therefore of the third Gospel – must have been a travelling companion of Paul. Moreover, this author's ultimate concern is with the spread of the Christian message among Gentiles.

That must mean, it was reasoned, that he too was a Gentile. So the only question is whether we know of a Gentile travelling companion of Paul. Yes we

do, Luke the 'beloved physician' named in Colossians 4:14. Thus, Luke was the author of the third Gospel." [24]

Manuscript Evidence

The earliest manuscript found to contain the Gospel of Luke is Suppl. Gr. 1120, otherwise known as P⁴, which contains some fifteen passages of Luke. This manuscript is housed in Paris, France and is dated to the *second half of the second century CE*. [25]

Some thirty passages of Luke are also to be found in the P. Bodmer XIV and VX, otherwise known as P⁷⁵. This manuscript is currently housed in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland and is dated to the *late second* and possibly *early third century CE*. [26]

Twenty passages of this gospel can be found in the P. Chester Beatty I, otherwise known as P⁴⁵, which is currently housed in Dublin, Ireland, in the Chester Beatty Collection, and is dated to the *early third century CE*. [27]

There are other manuscripts which contain traces of this gospel dating from the *third century*. However, a full version of this gospel is found in the Codex Sinaiticus, which dates to the *mid-fourth century CE*.

Overview of the Gospel of Luke

Of the four gospels, Luke is the only one to have been written for an individual; he writes to Theophilus, assuring him that his Church has its roots with the historical Jesus, explaining how Jesus first preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, the order of preference closely following Paul's ideas (Romans 1:16). In the Gospel of Luke, a Gentile audience is clear; references to Jesus' mission only being for the Jews is omitted, likewise any crude reference of Gentiles being *dogs and swine* is removed from this gospel. As such it can be argued with confidence that Luke belonged to a Pauline type Church (see the beginning of this chapter for an overview of the two types of Churches in the first century CE).

One interesting characteristic of this gospel is the theology of its author regarding the reason *why* Jesus died (readers should note that the Holy Quran does not support the idea that Jesus died on the cross, see *Introduction to Jesus' Life and Status in the Holy Quran* below). According to Paul and most modern Christians, Jesus' death was atonement for the sins of mankind. In that, he took on the sins for everyone who believed in his resurrection. Not so according to the author of Luke (and Acts of the Apostles). In fact, no where in either gospel or Acts would you find this concept.

Jesus does die according to this author; he dies intentionally. However, he does so as to bring about *repentance* in the people, and this repentance brings salvation. This has been argued by many scholars, such as Bart Ehrman, and will be shown throughout this book as well, e.g. parts of the Gospel of Mark where atonement is spoken of, Luke changes the text and removes any reference to it. See notes under [Luke 22:29](#) as an example.

Authorship of the Gospel of John

According to Christian tradition the author of the Gospel of John was the disciple John, the son of Zebedee. However, there is little if any evidence to attribute the author to the son of Zebedee. Early Church historian Eusebius records the saying of Irenaeus (180 CE) who states that “the Church at Ephesus was founded by Paul and John remained there until the Trojans’ time...”^[28]. However, it seems strange that another bishop; Ignatius of Antioch, at around 110 CE wrote a letter to the Ephesians and called them the people of Paul, without alluding to the presence of the great disciple and gospel writer, John, in their midst. Most scholars will also argue that the disciple John was not educated enough to compose an entire book in Greek, he was a fisherman or the lower class, and according to the New Testament itself, he was unlearned or illiterate (Acts 4:13).^[29]

Very much like the previous gospels, this gospel is also anonymous. The original language it was written in is debatable amongst the scholars; however most have come to the conclusion that it was written in Greek. There can be no doubt that the gospel was written much later than the previous three, and would most likely date to around 110 CE.

However, the picture of Jesus portrayed in this gospel is different from the others, which may point to the fact that its source was different from the Synoptic (first three) gospels and the audience may well be different from the others.

Naming of the Gospel

Like Matthew and Luke, the author Bart Erhman explains how the name “John” got assigned to the third gospel:

“The reasons for naming the fourth gospel John are less straightforward but somewhat more intriguing. In many ways the disciple who is closest to Jesus in this gospel is not Peter but the mysterious ‘disciple whom Jesus loved’ (e.g. John 13:23; 20:2). Who was this beloved disciple? He is never called by name. But the author indicates that he wrote down what he knew about Jesus (21:24-25). Some readers (wrongly) read the reference to him in 19:35 – where he sees water and blood coming out of Jesus’ side at his crucifixion – to be the author’s reference to himself, spoken in the third person. So the author was thought to be someone particularly close to Jesus. Which of Jesus’ close disciples would it be?

In the other Gospels, Jesus’ closest disciples, the ‘inner three’, were Peter, James, and John (e.g., Mark 5:37; 9:2-13). But the Beloved Disciple of John’s Gospel could not be Peter because he is mentioned in episodes alongside Peter (e.g. 20:1-10). Moreover, it was widely known that James the son of Zebedee had been martyred early in the history of the Church, before any of the gospels were written (Acts 12:2). That leaves John, the son of Zebedee, who is otherwise not called by name in the gospel. Even though he is elsewhere said to be illiterate (Acts 4:13) he came to be considered the Beloved Disciple who wrote the fourth gospel.”^[30]

Manuscript Evidence

The earliest manuscript found to contain the Gospel of John is Gr. P. 457, otherwise known as P⁵². This manuscript contains five verses of John and is housed in Manchester, England, dating back to the *early second century CE*.^[31]

Fifteen passages of John are also to be found in the P. Bodmer II + Inv. Nr. 4274/4298, otherwise known as P⁶⁶. This manuscript is housed in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland and is dated back to *mid-second century CE*. It does not contain the pericope (passage) of the adulteress (John 7:53-8:11), making it the earliest witness not to include this spurious passage (see notes under the verses for more details).

Passages of John are also to be found in the P. Bodmer XIV and VX, otherwise known as P⁷⁵. In fact, a large proportion of this gospel is included in this manuscript which is currently housed in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland and is dated back to the *late second and possibly early third century CE*.^[32] Again, this manuscript does not contain the pericope of the adulteress (John 7:53-8:11).

Some ten verses of John are to be found in the P. Oxy. 4447, otherwise known as P¹⁰⁸. The manuscript is currently housed in Oxford, England and is dated back to the *late second and early third century CE*.^[33]

There are other manuscripts which contain more of this gospel dating from the *third century*, such as the P²², P⁴⁵. However, a full version of this gospel is to be found in the Codex Sinaiticus, which dates back to the *mid-fourth century CE*.

Overview of the Gospel of John

As already outlined, the Gospel of John differs a great deal from the Synoptic (first three) gospels in structure and doctrinal substance. The fourth gospel focuses on Jesus, more than anything else, and his relationship with God. There are no parables, as in the previous gospels, but rather long speeches by Jesus about himself; and also fewer miracles are mentioned. He is portrayed as a stranger from Heaven, coming down to earth to rebuke people and then allowing himself to be killed as the Passover lamb.

None of the fundamentals of the first three gospels such as: John the Baptist introducing Jesus; the wilderness temptation; teaching in parables; engaging in exorcisms; the transfiguration; silencing demons; the Lord's Supper; praying in the Garden of Gethsemane; and the Sanhedrin trial etc. are mentioned in the Gospel of John. It is as though the most important aspects of the earlier gospels were not important for this author.

The structure of this gospel also differs a great deal: Jesus' ministry is now three years rather than one in the Synoptic gospels; there is no Last Supper; instead Jesus washes the feet of the disciples; and the trial of Jesus also differs.

Introduction to Jesus' Life and Status in the Holy Quran

The fourth Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community did an excellent summary of the life of Jesus, see below:

According to the gospels Jesus was the literal son of God, born of a virgin. He wandered Galilee and Jerusalem, teaching in parables and healing people; he then travelled to Jerusalem where he was subsequently arrested and sentenced to death by crucifixion. He died, then was resurrected and ascended bodily to God where he still is and will return in the then near future.

He was more than a Prophet for our Christian friends; the literal son of God and third member of the Holy Trinity. It was God's plan from the beginning to save mankind by sending His son to die for their sins, and this is what Jesus' life was all about. For more Christians earlier revelations primarily pointed to the coming of Jesus and it is *only* through the belief of the death and resurrection of Jesus that one is able to be saved and to achieve salvation.

The Holy Quran provides details of the main aspects of Jesus' life; that he was sent as a prophet to preach to the Children of Israel and that he survived the attempted murder/crucifixion. The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) taught that the life of Jesus was as follows: He was born of a virgin; he then grew up like a normal child; and at around the age of thirty received his first revelation, informing him that he was a prophet. He then began his mission to reform the Jews. He started preaching in his homeland in Galilee and surrounding areas, and he would often visit synagogues, and preach in open fields and by the Sea of Galilee. It was when Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem during the Passover to announce his prophethood and declare that he was the Messiah, that the leading Jews planned to have him arrested. Although Jesus was arrested, tried as a rebel and sentenced to death by Pilate (the Roman Governor of Jerusalem), he survived the cross and travelled to the neighbouring lands to continue his mission. Since he could no longer remain safe in Roman jurisdiction, he therefore travelled and preached around the Diaspora (neighbouring lands where Jews lived) and continued his mission to preach to the rest of the tribes of Israel, migrating east to eventually land in India where he died at a ripe old age of about 120 years.

Both scriptures (Holy Quran and Bible) mention many of Jesus' miracles, and it is the view of the author that Jesus may well have performed many of these miracles which seem to contradict many scientific laws, e.g. walking on water mentioned in the gospels; curing people; or even feeding thousands with little food. Some will argue that these could never happen literally as such things go against the law of nature and/or are not scientific. However, certain natural phenomena which have often had a mythological interpretation in the past, e.g. a solar eclipse in Chinese mythology was often believed to have happened when a legendary celestial dragon devoured the Sun; or hypnosis and other tricks performed by modern magicians would have been interpreted as real magic hundreds of years ago. However, this does not mean that all of the events in the past can be explained as such; not all of God's natural laws have been discovered, and thus it cannot be argued that such events or acts done by prophets never could have happened literally in the past. They may have; some can be explained scientifically, some not...yet.

Throughout this book, I will be utilising the teachings and guidance of the “founder of the Ahmadiyya community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, who declared about a hundred years ago that Jesus, a true prophet of God was delivered from the cross as was implied in his earlier discourses. For the first time in the history of Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, divinely guided as he was, lifted the mystical veil from the brilliant realities of Jesus’ life. It was he who declared in the face of the bitter resentment of the majority of the orthodox Muslims that Jesus had neither died upon the cross, nor ascended bodily to heaven, but was miraculously delivered alive from the cross in keeping with God’s promise. Therefore Jesus migrated in search of the lost sheep of the House of Israel as he himself had promised.”^[34]

Introduction to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Promised Messiah

Rather than introducing the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) myself, I thought it best to quote an article on the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's official web-site, alislam.org. See below:

On February 13th, 1835, in the small Indian village of Qadian, a man named Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) was born. He belonged to a well-known and noble family.

All religions contain prophecies that foretell the advent of a special individual, who will come as a reformer in the latter days. In Islam, Muslims await a promised Mahdi and Messiah. The advent of the Promised Messiah(as) was prophesied by the Holy Prophet(sa) himself. According to a tradition, the Holy Prophet(sa) was sitting among his companions, two verses from Surah Al-Jum'uah were revealed,

“He it is Who has raised among the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom though before that they were in manifest error; And He will raise him among others of them who have not yet joined them. He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (62:3-4)

One of the companions of the Holy Prophet(sa) questioned to whom this verse related to, and the Prophet of Islam(sa) replied, while putting his hand on Salman(ra), a Persian man,

“If faith were to go up to the Pleiades, a man from among these would surely find it.” (Bukhari).

Starting from his childhood, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)'s unusual interest in religion was noticed by many, including his father, who nicknamed him 'Maseetar' meaning 'one who spends most of his time in a mosque observing prayer'.

At an early age, he began to receive revelations from God, as well as visions and true dreams. In the years 1864 or 1865, the Promised Messiah(as) had a vision where he saw the Holy Prophet(sa). This verified further, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) had a strong connection with the Prophet of Islam(sa). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) was shown that he would have a fruitful spiritual future.

The Promised Messiah's father wanted for his son to pursue government service, which would allow him a handsome means to support his family financially. However, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) felt his time pursuing his worldly occupation was like a “prison sentence” as he was deeply attached to spirituality and enhancing his religious knowledge. Therefore, during his spare time, he continued to study the Holy Qur'an, and always strove to serve humanity, often helping those who were in need. He also spent his time debating with Christian missionaries who lived in his neighbourhood, defending his beloved faith, Islam.

The June of 1876 was a tragic time for the Promised Messiah(as) as his father passed away. Earlier, on the same day, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) had received a revelation from God revealing about his father's death. The Promised Messiah(as) was quite saddened by the death, and was worried about the troubles his family would now face, with limited financial means. However, since Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) was an individual loved by God, Allah Almighty sent another revelation,

"Is Allah not sufficient for his servant?" (39:37)

This assurance filled the Promised Messiah(as) with contentment that Allah Almighty would always provide for him. In 1868 or 1869, the Promised Messiah(as) received the revelation,

"Thy God is well pleased with what thou hast done. He will bless thee greatly, so much so that Kings shall seek blessing from your garments."

This seemed a strange revelation at the time—why would kings seek blessings from the clothes of someone hardly known outside this small remote village in India? But, history bears witness, that this revelation became reality, as the legacy of the Promised Messiah(as) unfolded and reached people from all over the world, from all walks of life, rich and poor, till today.

The flow of revelations and visions continued, until in 1882 he received the revelation which made it clear that he, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) , was to be the appointed one, the one commissioned by God to serve His cause; he was the Promised Messiah(as).

In January of 1886, he received a prophecy that foretold of a handsome and spiritually purified son, who would be born to the Promised Messiah(as). This prophecy was followed by one other. The second prophecy specified the context within which the Promised Messiah(as) would be granted his promised son. Both of these prophecies were indeed fulfilled on the 12th of January, 1889 when God blessed the Promised Messiah(as) with a son who was named Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad(as). This Promised Son also became the second Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat.

The publication of the Promised Messiah(as)'s first book 'Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya', was a huge step in the Ahmadiyya movement. This book not only helped pave the way for Ahmadiyya, but also helped Islam at the time of need. At the time of the publication, Islam was facing religious attacks from various religious movements, including Christianity. Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya helped provide readers with convincing arguments against other religious movements. This book contained arguments, proving the superiority of Holy Qur'an over other Holy Scriptures. It also proved the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa).

In 1889 Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) received the Divine revelation:

"When thou hast determined, put thine trust in Allah. And build the Ark under Our eyes, as commanded by our revelation. Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hand."

After this revelation Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) published a public announcement, that read:

‘I have been ordained to announce that those who are seekers after truth should swear allegiance to me so that they may be enabled to find a way to the true faith, true purity and the love of God.’

The call for Initiation or “Bai’at” was answered immediately by those who had already recognised that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) was indeed the Promised Messiah, and was appointed by God Almighty himself. The first Initiation ceremony took place in Ludhiana on 23rd March 1889, laying the foundation for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Hazrat Maulvi Nurudin(ra), became the first person to be initiated at his hand.

In 1891 in Qadian, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) received repeated revelations that Jesus(as) of Nazareth, in whose second advent both the Muslims and Christians believed, had died a natural death and that what was meant by his second advent was that a person should appear in the spirit of Jesus and that he himself was that person, the Promised Messiah(as).

After writing over 80 books and tens of thousands of letters, delivering hundreds of lectures, and engaging in scores of public debates, the Promised Messiah(as) passed away on May 26, 1908. Yet his legacy as the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, continues to prevail throughout the world today. He was a man, deeply in love with and treaded on the footsteps of his beloved master, the Holy Prophet(sa), with every breath of his life. He was man beloved by Allah Almighty, and was vouchsafed a revelation, “Kings shall seek blessing from your garments”, which rings true to this very day. ^[35]

Introduction to the Biblical Manuscripts

Throughout this commentary, in the sections labelled as *Textual Variants*, differences in the ancient biblical manuscripts will be highlighted, differences in many of the famous manuscripts listed below will be outlined, and for this reason it may be worth providing a short introduction to each of the major manuscripts. The extracts below are taken from Sir Frederic Kenyon's brilliant book; *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, which even though published over a hundred years ago in 1895, is still a brilliant source to refer to when it comes to these manuscripts.

Codex Sinaiticus ✕

"One of the latest (manuscripts) found of all the flock, yet one of the most important, and therefore (since the letters of the Latin and Greek alphabets had been already appropriated for other manuscripts) designated by its discoverer by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Aleph.

The discovery of this manuscript, was the supreme triumph of the great biblical scholar, Constantine Tischendorf. In the year 1844 he was travelling in the East in search of manuscripts, and in the course of his travels he visited the monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai.

Whilst working in the library, he noticed a basket containing a large number of stray pages of manuscripts; among these he was astounded to behold several leaves of the oldest Greek writing he had ever set eyes on, and, as a short inspection proved, containing parts of the Greek Bible.

No less than forty-three such leaves did he extract, and the librarian casually observed that two basket loads of similar waste paper had already been consumed in the furnace of the monastery.

It is therefore not surprising that he easily obtained permission to keep the leaves which he had picked up; but when he discovered that some eighty more leaves of the Old Testament from the same manuscript were also in existence, difficulties were made about letting him see them; and he had to content himself with informing the monks of their value, and entreating them to stoke their fires with something less precious.

He then returned to Europe, and having presented his treasure to his sovereign, King Frederick Augustus of Saxony, published its contents under the name of the Codex Frederico-Augustinus.

These forty-three leaves belonged, like all that Tischendorf had yet seen or heard of, to the Old Testament, containing portions of 1 Chronicles, 2 Esdras, Tobit, and Jeremiah, with Esther complete; they are now at Leipzig, separated from the rest of the volume to which they once belonged.

In 1853 he returned to Sinai; but his former warning, and perhaps the interest aroused in Europe by the discovery, had made the monks cautious, and he could hear nothing more concerning the manuscript.

In 1859 he visited the monastery once again, this time under the patronage of the Tsar Alexander II, the patron of the Greek Church; but still his enquiries were met with blank negation, until one evening, only a few days before he was to depart, in the course of conversation with the steward of the monastery, he showed him a copy of his recently published edition of the Septuagint. Thereupon, the steward remarked that he too had a copy of the Septuagint, which he would like to show to his visitor.

Accordingly he took him to his room, and produced a heap of loose leaves wrapped in a cloth; and there before the astonished scholar's eyes lay the identical manuscript for which he had been longing.

Not only was part of the Old Testament there, but the New Testament, complete from beginning to end. Concealing his feelings, he asked to be allowed to keep it in his room that evening to examine it; leave was given, 'and that night it seemed sacrilege to sleep.' He tried to buy the manuscript, without success. Then he asked to be allowed to take it to Cairo to study; but since the monk in charge of the library objected, he had to leave it behind.

The Superior of the monastery, however, was at Cairo and he, at Tischendorf's request, sent for the manuscript and placed it in his hands, a few sheets at a time, for copying. Then Tischendorf suggested that it would be a graceful act to present it to the Tsar of Russia, as the protector of the Greek Church; and since the monks desired the influence of the Tsar in connection with the election of a new archbishop, they consented to this, and after dilatory negotiations, Tischendorf was allowed to take the precious manuscript to Russia for presentation to the Tsar.

In view of stories put about subsequently by later generations of monks at St Catherine's, it should be emphasised that Tischendorf's behaviour was quite correct throughout. Throughout it all, he acted in agreement with the monks, and when there was some delay in the arrival of the counter-gift which, in accordance with Oriental usage, was expected from the Tsar, he intervened and secured the transmission of a sum of nine thousand roubles and some decorations.

For the rest of his life he remained on good terms with the Sinai community, as contemporary documents show.

The romance of the Codex Sinaiticus was not yet over, however. Since the year 1856 an ingenious Greek, named Constantine Simonides, had been creating a considerable sensation by producing quantities of Greek manuscripts professing to be of fabulous antiquity - such as a Homer in an almost prehistoric style of writing; a lost Egyptian historian; a copy of St Matthew's Gospel on papyrus, written fifteen years after the Ascension (!); and other portions of the New Testament dating from the first century. These items enjoyed a short period of notoriety, and were then exposed as forgeries.

Among the scholars concerned in the exposure was Tischendorf; and the revenge taken by Simonides was distinctly humorous. While stoutly maintaining the genuineness of his own wares, he admitted that he had written one manuscript which passed as being very ancient, and that was the Codex Sinaiticus, the discovery of which had been so triumphantly proclaimed by Tischendorf!

The idea was ingenious, but it would not bear investigation. Apart from the internal evidence of the text itself, the variations which no forger, however clever, could have invented, it was shown that Simonides could not have completed the task in the time which he professed to have taken, and that there was no such edition of the Greek Bible as that from which he professed to have copied it.

This little cloud over the credit of the newly-discovered manuscript therefore rapidly passed away, and the manuscript reposed, still unbound and in the cloth which had wrapped it at Sinai, in what was presumed to be its final home.

It had, however, one more transmigration to undergo. In 1933 it became known that the Soviet Government was not unwilling to sell it, having little use for bibles but a greater use for money. Indeed, negotiations had previously been opened with an American syndicate; but the financial crisis supervened, and America's difficulty gave England an unhopd-for opportunity.

After prolonged negotiations a bargain was concluded by which it passed into the possession of the Trustees of the British Museum for the sum of £100,000 (much less than the sum contemplated in the American negotiations), of which half was guaranteed by the British Government.

Accordingly, just before Christmas, 1933, the great Bible entered the British Museum, amid scenes of much popular excitement. There were, of course, those who criticised the purchase.

Some used the argument of Judas Iscariot in John XII.5, but found that its parentage made it unpopular; some revived the legends of Tischendorf's misconduct and the claim of Simonides, but these also had little success. Others, more plausibly, argued that since an excellent photographic facsimile had been published by the Oxford University Press (New Testament, 1911; Old Testament, 1922) from photographs taken by Professor Kirsopp Lake, the original was of no further importance; but even this (which never commended itself to those who had experience of MSS. and photographs) has been disproved by a study of the scribes and correctors of the MS. by Messrs H. J. M. Milne and T. G. Skeat of the British Museum (published 1938), which never could have been carried through without access to the MS. itself.

The manuscript has now been beautifully and securely bound by Mr Douglas Cockerell, and one may hope that it has now reached its final resting place.

There are four narrow columns to each page (except in the poetical books, where there are only two), and the eight columns thus presented to the reader when the volume is opened have much of the appearance of the succession of columns in a papyrus roll; it is not at all impossible that it was actually copied from such rolls.

The vellum is made from fine skins and is of excellent quality; the writing is large, clear, and good, without any attempt at ornamentation.

The MS. originally contained the whole Greek Bible, but, as has been stated above, only a part of the Old Testament escaped the waste-paper basket of the Sinai monastery. The New Testament is complete, and at the end are added two apocryphal works, which for a long time enjoyed almost equal credit with the New Testament books, but finally failed to obtain a position in the Canon - namely, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermes.

The original text has been corrected in many places; the various correctors being indicated in critical editions as κ a, κ b, κ c, etc. The date of the manuscript is in the fourth century, probably about the middle of it.

It can hardly be much earlier than AD 340, since the divisions of the text known as the Eusebian sections are indicated in the margin of the gospels, in a hand evidently contemporaneous with the text; and these sections, which are a device for forming a sort of Harmony of the Gospels, by showing which sections in each gospel have parallel sections in any of the others, were due to the scholar Eusebius, who died about AD 340.

On the other hand, comparison with other hands of the fourth century, of which more are now available than was formerly the case, seems to show that it cannot be appreciably later than the middle of the century.

The oldest correctors, κ a and κ b, are not much later than the manuscript itself, even if they are not, as Messrs Milne and Skeat think, the original scribes themselves, y, a very active group of correctors, is of the seventh century; the others, later and of small importance.”^[36]

Codex Vaticanus B

“As its name shows, it is in the great Vatican Library at Rome, which has been its home since some date before 1481. There is, therefore, no story to tell of the discovery of this MS.; the interest which attaches to its history is of a different kind, and relates to the long struggle that was necessary before its contents were made accessible to scholars.

For some reason which does not clearly appear, the authorities of the Vatican Library put continual obstacles in the way of all who wished to study it in detail. A correspondent of Erasmus in 1533 sent that scholar a number of selected readings from it, as proof of its superiority to the received Greek text.

In 1669 a collation (or statement of its various readings) was made by Bartolucci, but it was never published, and remained unknown until 1819. Other imperfect collations were made about 1720 and 1780.

Napoleon carried the manuscript off as a prize of victory to Paris, where it remained till 1815, when the many treasures of which he had despoiled the libraries of the Continent were returned to their respective owners.

Whilst at Paris it was studied by Hug, and its great age and supreme importance were first fully made known; but after its return to Rome a period of seclusion set in.

In 1843 Tischendorf, after waiting for several months, was allowed to see it for six hours. Next year De Muralt was permitted to study it for nine hours.

In 1845 the great English scholar Tregelles was allowed indeed to see it but not to copy a word. His pockets were searched before he might open it, and all writing materials were taken away. Two clerics stood beside him and snatched away the volume if he looked too long at any one passage!

However, the Roman authorities now took the task in hand themselves, and in 1857 and 1859 editions by Cardinal Mai were published, which, however, differed so much from one another and were both so inaccurate as to be almost useless.

In 1866 Tischendorf once more applied for permission to edit the MS., but with difficulty obtained leave to examine it for the purpose of collating complicated passages.

Unfortunately the great scholar so far forgot himself as to copy out twenty pages in full, contrary to the conditions under which he had been allowed access to the MS., and his permission was naturally withdrawn.

Renewed entreaty procured him six days' longer study, making in all fourteen days of three hours each; and by making the very most of his time Tischendorf was able in 1867 to publish the most perfect edition of the manuscript which had yet appeared.

An improved Roman edition appeared in 1868-81; but the final and decisive publication was reserved for the years 1889-90, when a complete photographic facsimile of the whole MS. made its contents once and for all the common property of all scholars.

The Codex Vaticanus originally contained the entire Greek Bible, but it has suffered not a little from the ravages of time. The beginning has been lost, as far as Gen.46.28; in the middle, Psalms 106-138 have dropped out; at the end, the latter part of Hebrews (from Chapter 9.14), the Pastoral Epistles, and the whole of the Apocalypse have disappeared.

It is written on 759 leaves (out of an original total of about 820) of very fine vellum, each leaf measuring 10.5 by 10 inches, with three columns to the page. The writing (see Plate 17) is in small and delicate uncials, perfectly simple and unadorned.

There are no enlarged initials, no stops or accents, no divisions into chapters or sections such as are found in later MSS., but a different system of division peculiar to this manuscript.

Unfortunately, the beauty of the original writing has been spoilt by a later corrector, who, thinking perhaps that the original ink was becoming faint, traced over every letter afresh, omitting only those letters and words which he believed to be incorrect. Thus it is only in the case of such words that we see the original writing untouched and undamaged.

Over the character of the text contained in B a most embittered controversy has raged. It will have been noticed that it is only within quite recent years that \aleph and B have emerged from their obscurity and have become generally known; and it so happens that these two most ancient manuscripts differ markedly from the class of text represented by A, which up to the time of their appearance was held to be the oldest and best authority in existence.

Hence there was a natural reluctance to abandon the ancient readings at the bidding of these two newcomers, imposing though their appearance might be; and this was especially the case after the publication of Dr Hort's theory, which assigned to these two manuscripts, and especially to B, a pre-eminence which is almost overwhelming.

Dean Burgon vehemently turned against the text of Westcott and Hort, and even went so far as to argue that these two documents owed their preservation, not to the goodness of their text, but to its depravity, having been, so to speak, pilloried as examples of what a copy of the Scriptures ought not to be! In spite of the learning with which the Dean maintained his arguments, and of the support which equally eminent but more moderate scholars such as Dr Scrivener gave to his conclusions, they have failed to hold their ground.

Scholars in general believe B to be the chief evidence for the most ancient form of the New Testament text, and it is clear that the Revisers of our English Bible attached the greatest weight to its authority.

Even where it stands alone, or almost alone, its evidence must be treated with respect; and such readings not infrequently find a place in the margin of the Revised Version. One notable instance, the omission of the last twelve verses of St Mark, has been mentioned in speaking of the Codex Sinaiticus; others will be found recorded in the notes to the Variorum Bible or in any critical edition of the Greek New Testament.” ^[37]

Codex Alexandrinus A

“This has been one of the chief treasures of the British Museum since its foundation, and a volume of it may be seen, side by side with the Sinaiticus, by every visitor in one of the showcases in the Department of Manuscripts. Its history, at least in later years, is much less obscure than that of the Sinaiticus.

In 1624 it was offered by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, to Sir Thomas Roe, our ambassador in Turkey, for presentation to King James I. King James died before the manuscript started for England, and the offer was transferred to Charles I.

In 1627 the gift was actually accomplished, and the MS. remained in the possession of our sovereigns until the Royal Library was presented to the nation by George II, when it entered its present home.

Its earlier history is also partially traceable. Cyril Lucar (according to contemporary statements) brought it to Constantinople from Alexandria, of which he had previously been patriarch; and an Arabic note at the beginning of the MS., signed by ‘Athanasius the humble’ (possibly Athanasius III, Patriarch of Alexandria, who died about 1308), states that it was a gift to the patriarchal cell in that town.

A later Latin note adds that the gift was made in AD 1098, but the authority for this statement is unknown.

Another Arabic note, written in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, states that the MS. was written by Thecia the martyr; and Cyril Lucar himself repeats this

statement, with the additions that Thecia was a noble lady of Egypt, that she wrote it shortly after the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), and that her name was originally written at the end of the manuscript. This, however, was only tradition, since the end of the MS. had been lost long before Cyril's time.

The authority for the tradition is quite unknown, and so early that a date is hardly possible. The occurrence in the manuscript of treatises by Eusebius (d. AD 340) and Athanasius (d. AD 373) makes it almost certain that it cannot be earlier than the middle of the fourth century, and competent authorities agree that the style of writing probably shows it to be somewhat later, in the first half of the fifth century.

It is certain that the writing of this MS. appears to be somewhat more advanced than that of the Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, especially in the enlargement of initial letters and similar elementary ornamentation; but it must be remembered that these characteristics are already found in earlier MSS., and that similar differences between contemporary MSS. may be found at all periods.

The dating of early Greek uncials on vellum is still very doubtful, for want of materials to judge from, and it is possible that the tradition mentioned above is truer than is generally supposed; but for the present it is safer to acquiesce in the general judgement which assigns the manuscript to the fifth century.

Like the Codex Sinaiticus, it originally contained the whole Greek Bible, with the addition of the two Epistles of Clement of Rome, which in very early days ranked almost with the inspired books; and, in addition, the table of contents shows that it originally included the Psalms of Solomon, the title of which, however, is so separated from the rest of the books as to indicate that they were regarded as standing on a different footing.

The Old Testament has suffered some slight mutilations, which have already been described; the New Testament has suffered more seriously, since the whole of St Matthew's Gospel, as far as Chapter 25.6, has been lost; together with leaves containing John 6.50-8.52 (where, however, the number of pages missing shows that the doubtful passage, 7.53-8.11, cannot have been present when the MS. was perfect); 2 Cor 4.13-12.6; one leaf of the first Epistle of Clement and the greater part of the second.

The leaves measure 12.75 by 10.25 inches, having two columns to each page, written in large and well-formed hands of round shape, apparently by two scribes in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament.

As regards the quality of the text preserved in the Codex Alexandrinus, admittedly does not stand quite so high as its two predecessors in age, \aleph and B. Different parts of the New Testament have evidently been copied from different originals; but in the gospels, at any rate, A is the oldest and most pre-eminent example of that revised 'Syrian' text which (to judge from the quotations in the Fathers) had become the predominant text as early as the fourth century.

It will often be found at the head of the great mass of later uncials and cursives which support the received text; and although it is much superior to the late cursives from which the 'received text' was in fact derived, it yet belongs to the same class, and will be found more often in agreement with the Authorised Version than with the Revised.

In the Acts and Epistles it ranks definitely with B and \aleph , and is perhaps an even better example of that class than they.

In the Apocalypse also it belongs to the Neutral type, and is probably the best extant MS. of that book, with the possible exception of P47. The Epistles of Clement, which are very valuable for the history of the early Church, the first having been written about the end of the first century and the other before the middle of the second, were until quite recently not known to exist in any other manuscript.

The Eusebian sections and canons, referred to above (p.132), are indicated in the margins of the Gospels, which also exhibit the earliest example of a division into chapters. A similar division of the Acts and Epistles, ascribed to Euthalius of Alexandria, who wrote about AD 458, is not found in this manuscript; and this is an additional reason for believing it not to have been written later than the middle of the fifth century.

The Codex Alexandrinus was the first of the great manuscripts to be made accessible to scholars. The Epistles of Clement were published from it by Patrick Young in 1633; a collation of the New Testament and notes on the Pentateuch were published in Walton's Polyglot (1657); the Old Testament was printed by Grabe in 1707-20; and the New Testament by Woide in 1786.

In 1816-28 the Rev. H. H. Baber published the Old Testament in type resembling as closely as possible the writing of the original. Finally, a photographic reproduction of the whole MS. was published in 1879-83, under the editorship of E. Maunde Thompson, then Principal Librarian of the British Museum." [38]

Codex Bezae D

"In the University Library at Cambridge. This is undoubtedly the most curious, though certainly not the most trustworthy, manuscript of the New Testament at present known to us.

Its place of origin is doubtful. Egypt, Rome, southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, northern Africa have all been advocated, the last having perhaps a slight balance of probability.

It was at Lyons in the year 1562, when Theodore Beza, the disciple of Calvin and editor of the New Testament, procured it, probably after the sack of the city by the Huguenots in that year; and by Beza, from whom it derives its name, it was presented in 1581 to the University of Cambridge.

It is remarkable as the first example of a copy of the Bible in two languages, for it contains both Greek and Latin texts. It is also remarkable, as will be shown directly, on account of the many curious additions to and variations from the common text which it contains; and no manuscript has been the subject of so many speculations or the basis of so many conflicting theories. It was partially used by Stephanus in his edition of 1550 and by Beza in his various editions.

After its acquisition by Cambridge it was collated, more or less imperfectly, by various scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and published in full by Kipling in 1793.

A new edition, with full annotations, was issued by Dr Scrivener in 1864; and since that date two other Cambridge scholars, Professor Rendel Harris and Mr Chase, have made careful studies of its text from rather different points of view. A complete photographic facsimile was published in 1889.

In size the Codex Bezae is smaller than the manuscripts hitherto described, its pages measuring ten by eight inches. The Greek and Latin texts face one another on opposite pages, the Greek being on the left hand and the Latin on the right.

Each page contains a single column, not written continuously, as in the MSS. hitherto described, but in lines of varying length; the object (imperfectly attained, it is true) being to make the pauses of sense come at the end of a line.

It is written in uncials of rather large size, the Latin and Greek characters being made curiously alike, so that both pages have a similar general appearance at first sight. The writing is of unusual form, which suggests that it was not written in one of the principal centres of production, such as Alexandria or Rome, and which also caused it formerly to be assigned to a rather later date than now seems probable; it is now generally regarded as not later than the fifth century.

The manuscript has been corrected by many hands, including the original scribe himself; some of the correctors are nearly contemporary with the original writing, others are much later.

The existence of a Latin text is sufficient proof by itself that the manuscript was written in the west of Europe, where Latin was the language of literature and daily life.

In the East there would be no occasion for a Latin translation; but in the West Latin was the language which would be the most generally intelligible, while the Greek was added because it was the original language of the sacred books.

Also the volume seems to have been used somewhere where the Scriptures were publicly read in Greek, for the liturgical directions are all on the Greek pages. But Latin copies of the Scriptures existed long before this manuscript was written; and the question arises, whether the scribe has simply copied a Greek manuscript for his Greek pages and a Latin manuscript for his Latin, or whether he has taken pains to make the two versions correspond and represent the same readings of the original. On this point a rather curious division of opinion has arisen.

It is tolerably clear that in the first instance independent Greek and Latin texts were used as the authorities to be copied, but it is also clear that the texts have been to some extent assimilated to one another; and while D. Scrivener (and most scholars until recently) argues that the Latin has been altered to suit the Greek (and therefore ceases to be very valuable evidence for the text of the Old Latin version), Professor Rendel Harris and several later scholars maintain that the Greek has been altered to suit the Latin, and that therefore it is the Greek that is comparatively unimportant as evidence for the original Greek text.

The latest editor of Acts, Professor A. C. Dark, regards the Latin text as having no independent value. Striking evidence can be produced on both sides; so that

there seems to be nothing left but to conclude that both texts have been modified, which is in itself not an unreasonable conclusion.

Some scholars also have maintained that it has been influenced by the Syriac version.

The general result is that the evidence of D, whether for the Greek or Latin text, must be used with some caution; and care must be taken to make sure that any apparent variation is not due to some modification introduced by the scribe.

But the special interest of Codex Bezae is not to be found so much in verbal variations as in wider departures from the normal text, in which there is no question of mere accommodations of language, but which can only be due to a different tradition. Codex Bezae, unlike the MSS. hitherto described, which are copies of the entire Bible, contains only the Gospels and Acts, with a few verses of the Catholic Epistles, which originally preceded the Acts; but in these portions of the New Testament it exhibits a very remarkable series of variations from the usual text.

It is the chief representative of the Western type of text, finding its nearest ally in the African type of the Old Latin version. Its special characteristic is the free addition, and occasionally omission, of words, sentences, and even incidents." [39]

The Received Text/Textus Receptus/King James Version

During the middle ages, the Bible text which was most commonly used was the fourth century Latin- translated Bible by Jerome, the Vulgate. Thus those who wished to read the Bible had already read it in translation from the original Greek. It was in 1514 when a Dutch scholar, Desiderius Erasmus, first published the Greek New Testament. He was a renowned scholar who had studied the New Testament and other great works of antiquity. When he began his work, he visited Basel in search of suitable Greek manuscripts on which to base his text, but he did not find much, barely enough to begin his work; just a handful of medieval manuscripts, of which the most important ones seem to be two *twelfth century* manuscripts. However, for the Book of Revelations, he had to borrow a manuscript from his friend Johannes Reuchlin, but the copy he had was damaged in numerous places and had its entire last page missing (the last six verses of the book). In haste to get the job done, Erasmus took the existing Latin versions and translated them back into Greek for his own edition, thus creating textual variants which are not present in any other Greek New Testament manuscripts.

It was the above text with all its faults, based on just a handful of manuscripts, in most places just one and in the Book of Revelations, no manuscripts, which became the standard text for the printers in Western Europe for over 300 years after Erasmus. As can be seen, this edition was very weak, being sourced from very late manuscripts, dating over 1100 years after the originals were supposedly written. This edition contains passages such as 'The Woman Caught in Adultery' in John and the longer ending of Mark, both of which are acknowledged forgeries by all scholars. See Chapters 177 and 267 respectively for more details.

However, there was one key passage which the first edition of Erasmus did not contain, that being what scholars refer to as the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7-8) which is only found in the Latin manuscripts and in no Greek version. It reads as follows:

'There are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.'

This is the only passage in the entire Bible which actually refers to the doctrine of Trinity explicitly; without this passage Christian Theologians must argue the case for the existence of the Triune God through other implicit verses, with heavy Christian interpretation for support. However, since there are no Greek manuscripts which contain this passage, Erasmus had no choice but to exclude it from his edition. This of course outraged the theologians of his day, who accused him of tampering with the text to remove the doctrine of trinity. So to appease the theologians, Erasmus agreed that if anyone was able to show him a Greek manuscript which contained the passage, then he would include it in his future editions. So, as the story goes, a Greek manuscript was 'discovered' and presented to Erasmus, who then agreed to include it. It was obvious that someone had simply taken the Latin Bible and copied the letter of John into Greek and given it over to Erasmus.

From this copy all major versions of the Bible until around the twentieth century were created, the most famous of all being the King James Version, which is also based on the editions written by Erasmus; in that they contain passages which are commonly held to be later additions to the text. These editions or versions of the Bible, being based on Erasmus' Bible became the standard, as such the claim by Abraham and Bonaventure Elzevir in 1633: "You now have the text that is received by all, in which we have given nothing changed or corrupted" became famous and eventually became the name of the version: *Textus Receptus* or the *Received Text* which is the term used by Textual Critics to name Erasmus' edition rather than the oldest and best manuscripts.

The Gospel According to Mark

1:1 - Prologue

1. The beginning of the gospel^[40] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^[41]

1:2-6 - John the Baptist

2. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,^[42] "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, Who will prepare your way.
3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight!'"^[43]
4. John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism^[44] of repentance for forgiveness of sins.
5. All the country of Judea and all those of Jerusalem went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan river, confessing their sins.
6. John was clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.^[45]

1:7-8 - John's Messianic Preaching

7. He preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen."^[46]
8. I baptized you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."^[47]

1: 9-11 - The Baptism of Jesus

9. In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.^[48]
10. Immediately coming up from the water, he saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.^[49]
11. A voice came out of the sky, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."^[50]

1: 12-13 - The Temptation

12. Immediately the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness.^[51]
13. He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;^[52] He was with the wild animals; and the angels were serving him.^[53]

1: 14-15 - Ministry in Galilee

14. Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the message^[54] of God,^[55]
15. "The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in God's message."^[56]

1: 16-20 - The Call of the Disciples

16. Passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon^[57] and Andrew^[58] the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
17. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you into fishers of men."^[59]
18. Immediately they left their nets, and followed him.
19. Going on a little further from there, he saw James the son of Zebedee^[60] and John^[61] his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets.
20. Immediately he called them, and they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.^[62]

1: 21-22 - Teaching in the Synagogue at Capernaum

21. They went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught.^[63]
22. They were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.^[64]

1: 23-28 - The Healing of the Demonic in the Synagogue

- 23. Immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out,
- 24. saying, "What do we have to do with you, Jesus, you Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know you who you are: the Holy One of God!"
- 25. Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent^[65], and come out of him."
- 26. The unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.^[66]
- 27. They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!"^[67]
- 28. The report of him went out immediately everywhere into all the region of Galilee and its surrounding area.^[68]

1: 29-31 - The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law

- 29. Immediately, when they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.
- 30. Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him about her.
- 31. He came and took her by the hand and raised her up. The fever left her, and she served them.^[69]

1: 32-34 - The Sick Healed at Evening

- 32. At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by demons.^[70]
- 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.
- 34. He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. He didn't allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.^[71]

1: 35-38 - Jesus Departs from Capernaum

- 35. Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there.^[72]

36. Simon and those who were with him searched for him.
37. They found him and told him, "Everyone is looking for you."
38. He said to them, "Let's go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because I came out for this reason."^[73]

1: 39-45 - Preaching Tour in Galilee and Cleansing of the Leper

39. And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.
40. A leper came to him, begging him, kneeling down to him, and saying to him, "If you want to, you can make me clean."^[74]
41. And being moved with anger^[75], he stretched out his hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I want to. Be made clean."
42. When he had said this, immediately the leprosy departed from him and he was made clean.
43. He strictly warned him and immediately sent him out,
44. and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anybody, but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."^[76]
45. But he went out, and began to proclaim it much, and to spread about the matter, so that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was outside in desert places. People came to him from everywhere.^[77]

2: 1-12 - The Healing of the Paralytic

1. When he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was heard that he was at home.
2. Immediately many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even around the door; and he spoke the word to them.
3. Four people came, carrying a paralytic to him.^[78]
4. When they could not come near to him for the crowd, they removed the roof where he was. When they had broken it up, they let down the mat that the paralytic was lying on.^[79]
5. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."^[80]
6. But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,
7. "Why does this man speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"^[81]
8. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you reason these

things in your hearts?

9. Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven;' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?'
10. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ^[82]
11. "I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house."
12. He arose, and immediately took up the mat and went out in front of them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

2: 13-17 - The Call of Levi

13. He went out again by the seaside. All the multitude came to him, and he taught them.
14. As he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus^[83] sitting at the tax office. He said to him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him.
15. He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many, and they followed him.
16. The scribes and the Pharisees^[84], when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"^[85]
17. When Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."^[86]

2: 18-22 - The Question about Fasting

18. John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and they came and asked him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?"^[87]
19. Jesus said to them, "Can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can't fast.
20. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day."^[88]

21. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, or else the patch shrinks and the new tears away from the old, and a worse tear^[89] is made.
22. No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine pours out, and the skins will be destroyed; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins."^[90]

2: 23-28 - Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

23. He was going on the Sabbath day through the grain fields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of grain.
24. The Pharisees said to him, "Behold, why do they do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day?"^[91]
25. He said to them, "Did you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry - he, and those who were with him?
26. How he entered into God's house at the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the show bread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him?"^[92]
27. He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."^[93]
28. Therefore the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."^[94]

3: 1-6 - The Man with the Withered Hand

1. He entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there whose hand was withered.^[95]
2. They watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him.^[96]
3. He said to the man whose hand was withered, "Stand up."
4. He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do harm? To save a life or to kill?" But they were silent.^[97]
5. When he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts, he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.^[98]
6. The Pharisees went out, and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.^[99]

3: 7-12 - Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea

7. Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples; and a great multitude followed him from Galilee, from Judea,
8. from Jerusalem, from Idumaea, beyond the Jordan, and those from around Tyre and Sidon. A great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came to him.
9. He spoke to his disciples that a little boat should stay near him because of the crowd, lest they should crush him;^[100]
10. For he had healed many, so that as many as had diseases pressed on him that they might touch him.^[101]
11. The unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him and cried, "You are the Son of God!" ^[102]
12. He sternly warned them that they should not make him known. ^[103]

3: 13-19 - The Choosing of the Twelve

13. He went up into the mountain and called to himself those whom he wanted, and they went to him.
14. He appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach^[104]
15. and to have authority to cast out demons:
16. Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter);^[105]
17. James^[106] the son of Zebedee and John^[107] the brother of James, (whom he called Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder);
18. and Andrew,^[108] and Philip,^[109] and Bartholomew,^[110] and Matthew,^[111] and Thomas,^[112] and James the son of Alphaeus,^[113] and Thaddaeus,^[114] and Simon the Cananaean,^[115]
19. and Judas Iscariot,^[116] who also betrayed him. Then he came into a house.

3: 20-21 - Jesus is Thought to Be Beside Himself

20. The multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat.
21. And when his family^[117] heard it, they went out to seize him; for they said, "He is insane." ^[118]

3: 22-27 - On Collusion with Satan

22. The scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the prince of the demons he casts out the demons."^[119]
23. He summoned them and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"
24. If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
25. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.
26. If Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he can't stand, but has an end.^[120]
27. But no one can enter into the house of the strong man to plunder unless he first binds the strong man; then he will plunder his house.^[121]

3: 28-30 - The Sin against the Holy Spirit

28. "Most certainly I tell you, all sins of the sons of men,^[122] will be forgiven, including their blasphemies with which they may blaspheme;
29. but whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation."
30. —because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."^[123]

3: 31-35 - Jesus' True Kindred

31. His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent to him, calling him.^[124]
32. A multitude was sitting around him, and they told him, "Behold, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside looking for you."
33. He answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"
34. Looking around at those who sat around him, he said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers!
35. For whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, and mother."^[125]

4: 1-9 - The Parable of the Sower

1. Again he began to teach by the seaside. A great multitude was gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat in the sea, and sat down. All the multitude were on the land by the sea.
2. He taught them many things in parables, and told them in his teaching,
3. "Listen! Behold, the sower went out to sow,
4. and as he sowed, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and devoured it.
5. Others fell on the rocky ground, where it had little soil, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil.
6. When the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.
7. Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.
8. Others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing. Some produced thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times as much."
9. He said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."^[126]

4: 10-12 - The Reason for Speaking in Parables

10. When he was alone, those who were around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.
11. He said to them, "To you is given the mystery of God's Kingdom, but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables,
12. that 'seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest perhaps they should turn again, and their sins should be forgiven them.'"^[127]

4: 13-20 - Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower

13. He said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How will you understand all of the parables?"^[128]
14. The farmer sows the word.
15. The ones by the road are the ones where the word is sown; and when they have heard, immediately Satan comes, and takes away the word which has been sown in them.^[129]
16. These in the same way are those who are sown on the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy.

17. They have no root in themselves, but are short-lived. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they stumble.^[130]
18. Others are those who are sown among the thorns. These are those who have heard the word,
19. and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.^[131]
20. Those which were sown on the good ground are those who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, some thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times."^[132]

4: 21-25 - The Light of the World and On Judging

21. He said to them, "Is the lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn't it put on a stand?
22. For there is nothing hidden, except that it should be made known; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.
23. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear."
24. He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With whatever measure you give^[133] it will be measured to you, and more will be given to you.
25. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he who doesn't have, even that which he has will be taken away."^[134]

4: 26-29 - The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly

26. He said, "God's Kingdom is as if a man should cast seed on the earth,
27. and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, though he doesn't know how.
28. For the earth bears fruit by itself: first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.
29. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."^[135]

4: 30-32 - The Parable of the Mustard Seed

- 30. He said, "How will we liken God's Kingdom? Or with what parable will we illustrate it?
- 31. It's like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, though it is less than all the seeds that are on the earth,
- 32. yet when it is sown, grows up, and becomes greater than all the herbs, and puts out great branches, so that the birds of the sky can lodge under its shadow."^[136]

4: 33-34 - Jesus' Use of Parables

- 33. With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it.
- 34. Without a parable he didn't speak to them; but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.^[137]

4: 35-41 - Stilling the Storm

- 35. On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let's go over to the other side."
- 36. Leaving the multitude, they took him with them, even as he was, in the boat. Other boats were also with him.
- 37. A big wind storm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so much that the boat was already filled.
- 38. He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up, and told him, "Teacher, don't you care that we are dying?"^[138]
- 39. He awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.^[139]
- 40. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"
- 41. They were greatly afraid, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"^[140]

5: 1-20 - The Gadarene Demonics

- 1. They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.^[141]
- 2. When he had come out of the boat, immediately a man with an unclean spirit met him out of the tombs.
- 3. He lived in the tombs. Nobody could bind him any more, not even with chains,

4. because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the fetters broken in pieces. Nobody had the strength to tame him.
5. Always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones.^[142]
6. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and bowed down to him,^[143]
7. and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, don't torment me."^[144]
8. For he said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"
9. He asked him, "What is your name?" He said to him, "My name is Legion, for we are many."^[145]
10. He begged him much that he would not send them away out of the country.
11. Now on the mountainside there was a great herd of pigs feeding.^[146]
12. And they begged him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, that we may enter into them."
13. At once Jesus gave them permission. The unclean spirits came out and entered into the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and they were drowned in the sea.^[147]
14. Those who fed the pigs fled, and told it in the city and in the country. The people came to see what it was that had happened.
15. They came to Jesus, and saw him who had been possessed by demons sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, even him who had the legion; and they were afraid.
16. Those who saw it declared to them what happened to him who was possessed by demons, and about the pigs.
17. They began to beg him to depart from their region.^[148]
18. As he was entering into the boat, he who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him.
19. He didn't allow him, but said to him, "Go to your house, to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you."^[149]
20. He went his way, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how Jesus had done great things for him, and everyone marvelled.^[150]

5: 21-43 - Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Haemorrhage

21. When Jesus had crossed back over in the boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to him; and he was by the sea.^[151]
22. Behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, was coming; and seeing him, he fell at his feet,
23. and begged him much, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her, that she

may be made healthy, and live.”^[152]

24. He went with him, and a great multitude followed him, and they pressed upon him on all sides.
25. A certain woman, who had a discharge of blood for twelve years,^[153]
26. and had suffered many things by many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse,
27. having heard the things concerning Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, and touched his clothes.
28. For she said, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be made well.”^[154]
29. Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.
30. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked,
“Who touched my clothes?”
31. His disciples said to him, “You see the multitude pressing against you, and you say, ‘Who touched me?’”
32. He looked around to see her who had done this thing.
33. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all
the truth.^[155]
34. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be cured of your disease.”^[156]
35. While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue ruler’s house saying, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the
Teacher any more?”
36. But Jesus, when he heard the message spoken, immediately said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Don’t be afraid, only
believe.”
37. He allowed no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.
38. He comes to the synagogue ruler’s house, and he sees an uproar, weeping, and great wailing.
39. When he had entered in, he said to them, “Why do you make an uproar and weep? The child is not dead, but is asleep.”^[157]
40. They were laughing at him. But he cast them all out and takes the father of the child, her mother, and those who were with
him, and enters where the child was lying.
41. Taking the child by the hand, he said to her, “Talitha cumi!” which means, being interpreted, “Girl, I tell you, get up!”^[158]
42. Immediately the girl rose up and walked, for she was twelve years old. They were amazed with great amazement.
43. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and commanded that something should be given to her to eat.^[159]

1. He went out from there. He came into his own country^[160]; and his disciples followed him.
2. When the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many hearing him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things?" and, "What is the wisdom that is given to this man, that such mighty works come about by his hands?"^[161]
3. Isn't this the carpenter,^[162] the son of Mary and brother of James^[163] and Joses and Judas and Simon?^[164] Aren't his sisters here with us?" So they were offended at him.^[165]
4. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house."^[166]
5. He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them^[167]
6. He marvelled because of their unbelief. He went around the villages teaching.

6: 7-11 - Commissioning the Twelve

7. He called to himself the twelve, and began to send them out two by two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits.
8. He commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a staff only: no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse,^[168]
9. but to wear sandals, and not put on two tunics.^[169]
10. He said to them, "Wherever you enter into a house, stay there until you depart from there.
11. Whoever will not receive you nor hear you, as you depart from there, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony against them."^[170]

6: 12-16 - Opinions Regarding Jesus

12. They went out and preached that people should repent.
13. They cast out many demons, and anointed many with oil who were sick, and healed them.^[171]
14. King Herod^[172] heard this, for his name had become known, and he said, "John the Baptizer has risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

15. But others said, "He is Elijah." Others said, "He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets."
16. But Herod, when he heard this, said, "This is John, whom I beheaded. He has raised."^[173]

6: 17-29 - The Death of John the Baptist

17. For Herod himself had sent out and arrested John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her.
18. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."^[174]
19. Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him, but she couldn't,
20. for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed,^[175] and he heard him gladly.
21. Then a convenient day came, that Herod on his birthday made a supper for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee.
22. When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and those sitting with him. The king said to the young lady, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you."
23. He swore to her, "Whatever you shall ask of me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom."
24. She went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" She said, "The head of John the Baptizer."
25. She came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptizer on a platter."
26. The king was exceedingly sorry, but for the sake of his oaths, and of his dinner guests, he didn't wish to refuse her.
27. Immediately the king sent out a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring John's head, and he went and beheaded him in the prison,
28. and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the young lady; and the young lady gave it to her mother.
29. When his disciples heard this, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.^[176]

6: 30-31 - The Return of the Apostles

- 30. The apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus, and they told him all things, whatever they had done, and whatever they had taught.^[177]
- 31. He said to them, "You come apart into a deserted place, and rest awhile." For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.^[178]

6: 32-44 - Five Thousand Are Fed

- 32. They went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.
- 33. They saw them going, and many recognised him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them. ^[179]
- 34. Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.^[180]
- 35. When it was late in the day, his disciples came to him, and said, "This place is deserted, and it is late in the day.
- 36. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat."
- 37. But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They asked him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii^[181] worth of bread, and give them something to eat?"
- 38. He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go see." When they knew, they said, "Five, and two fish."
- 39. He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass.
- 40. They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.
- 41. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all.
- 42. They all ate, and were filled.
- 43. They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish.
- 44. Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.^[182]

6: 45-52 - The Walking on Water

45. Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat, and go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he himself sent the multitude away.
46. After he had taken leave of them, he went up the mountain to pray.
47. When evening had come, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land.
48. Seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea, and he would have passed by them,^[183]
49. but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;
50. for they all saw him, and were troubled. But he immediately spoke with them, and said to them, "Cheer up! It is I! Don't be afraid."
51. He got into the boat with them; and the wind ceased, and they were very amazed among themselves, and marvelled;^[184]
52. for they hadn't understood about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.^[185]

6: 53-56 - Healing at Gennesaret

53. When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.
54. When they had come out of the boat, immediately the people recognised him,
55. and ran around that whole region, and began to bring those who were sick on their mats to where they heard he was.
56. Wherever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched him were made well.^[186]

7: 1-23 - Defilement – Traditional and Real

1. Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together to him, having come from Jerusalem.
2. Now when they saw some of his disciples eating bread with defiled, that is unwashed, hands.^[187]
3. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews don't eat unless with clenched fists^[188] holding to the tradition of the elders. ^[189]
4. They don't eat when they come from the marketplace unless they bathe themselves, and there are many other things, which they have received to hold to: washings of cups, pitchers, bronze vessels, and couches.)^[190]

5. The Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why don't your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unwashed hands?"^[191]
6. He answered them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.
7. But they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
8. "For you set aside the commandment of God, and hold tightly to the tradition of men."^[192]
9. He said to them, "Full well do you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.
10. For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother;' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'^[193]
11. But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban,"' that is to say, given to God,
12. "then you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother,
13. making void the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down. You do many things like this."^[194]
14. He called all the multitude to himself, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand.
15. There is nothing from outside of the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man.
16. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"^[195]
17. When he had entered into a house away from the multitude, his disciples asked him about the parable.
18. He said to them, "Are you also without understanding? Don't you perceive that whatever goes into the man from outside can't defile him,
19. because it doesn't go into his heart, but into his stomach, then into the latrine?" Thus he was making all foods clean.
20. He said, "That which proceeds out of the man, that defiles the man.
21. For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual sins, murders, thefts,
22. covetings, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness."^[196]
23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

7: 24-30 - The Syrophoenician Woman

24. From there he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He entered into a house, and didn't want anyone to know it, but he couldn't escape notice.
25. For a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet.
26. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race. She begged him that he would cast the demon out of her daughter.
27. But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not appropriate to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."
28. But she answered him, "Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."
29. He said to her, "For this saying, go your way. The demon has gone out of your daughter."
30. She went away to her house, and found the child having been laid on the bed, with the demon gone out.^[197]

7: 31-37 - Jesus Heals a Deaf Mute and Many Others

31. Again he departed from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and came to the sea of Galilee, through the middle of the region of Decapolis.
32. They brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. They begged him to lay his hand on him.
33. He took him aside from the multitude, privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue.
34. Looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!"
35. Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was released, and he spoke clearly.
36. He commanded them that they should tell no one, but the more he commanded them, so much the more widely they proclaimed it.
37. They were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes even the deaf hear, and the mute speak!"^[198]

8: 1-10 - Four Thousand Are Fed

1. In those days, when there was a very great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to himself, and said to them,

2. "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have stayed with me now three days, and have nothing to eat.
3. If I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way, for some of them have come a long way."
4. His disciples answered him, "From where could one satisfy these people with bread here in a deserted place?"
5. He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."
6. He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves. Having given thanks, he broke them, and gave them to his disciples to serve, and they served the multitude.
7. They had a few small fish. Having blessed them, he said to serve these also.
8. They ate, and were filled. They took up seven baskets of broken pieces that were left over.
9. Those who had eaten were about four thousand. Then he sent them away.^[199]
10. Immediately he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the region of Dalmanutha.^[200]

8: 11-13 - The Sign of Jonah

11. The Pharisees came out and began to question him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, and testing him.^[201]
12. He sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Most certainly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation."
13. He left them, and again entering into the boat, departed to the other side.^[202]

8: 14-21 - The Leaven of the Pharisees

14. They forgot to take bread; and they didn't have more than one loaf in the boat with them.
15. He warned them, saying, "Take heed: beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod."
16. They reasoned with one another, saying, "It's because we have no bread."
17. Jesus, perceiving it, said to them, "Why do you reason that it's because you have no bread? Don't you perceive yet, neither understand? Is your heart still hardened?"
18. Having eyes, don't you see? Having ears, don't you hear? Don't you remember?
19. When I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They told

him, "Twelve."

- 20. "When the seven loaves fed the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They told him, "Seven."
- 21. He asked them, "Don't you understand yet?"^[203]

8: 22-26 - A Blind Man is Healed at Bethsaida

- 22. He came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to him, and begged him to touch him.
- 23. He took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village. When he had spat on his eyes, and laid his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything.
- 24. He looked up, and said, "I see men; for I see them like trees walking."
- 25. Then again he laid his hands on his eyes. He looked intently, and was restored, and saw everyone clearly.
- 26. He sent him away to his house, saying, "Don't enter into the village."^[204]

8: 27-30 - Peter's Confession

- 27. Jesus went out, with his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?"
- 28. They told him, "John the Baptizer, and others say Elijah, but others, one of the prophets."
- 29. He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."
- 30. He commanded them that they should tell no one about him.^[205]

8: 31-33 - Jesus Foretells His Passion

- 31. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
- 32. He spoke to them openly. Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33. But he, turning around, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you have in mind not the things of God, but the things of men."^[206]

8: 34 - 9:1 - "If Any Man Would Come after Me..."

34. He called the multitude to himself with his disciples, and said to them, "Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."^[207]
35. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel^[208] will save it.
36. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?
37. For what will a man give in exchange for his life?^[209]
38. For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he comes in his Father's glory, with the holy angels."^[210]
1. He said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste death until they see God's Kingdom come with power."^[211]

9: 2-10 - The Transfiguration

2. After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and brought them up onto a high mountain privately by themselves, and he was changed into another form in front of them.
3. His clothing became glistening, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.
4. Elijah and Moses appeared to them, and they were talking with Jesus.
5. Peter answered Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let's make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
6. For he didn't know what to say, for they were very afraid.
7. A cloud came, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."^[212]
8. Suddenly looking around, they saw no one with them any more, except Jesus only.^[213]

9. As they were coming down from the mountain, he commanded them that they should tell no one what things they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
10. They kept this saying to themselves, questioning what the 'rising from the dead' meant.^[214]

9: 11-13 - The Coming of Elijah

11. They asked him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
12. He said to them, "Elijah indeed comes first, and restores all things. How is it written about the Son of Man, that he should suffer many things and be despised?
13. But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they have also done to him whatever they wanted to, even as it is written about him."^[215]

9: 14-29 - Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by a Spirit

14. Coming to the disciples, he saw a great multitude around them, and scribes questioning them.^[216]
15. Immediately all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, greeted him.
16. He asked the scribes, "What are you asking them?"
17. One of the multitude answered, "Teacher, I brought to you my son, who has a mute spirit;
18. and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and wastes away. I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they weren't able."
19. He answered him, "Unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me."^[217]
20. They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth.
21. He asked his father, "How long has it been since this has come to him?" He said, "From childhood.
22. Often it has cast him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us, and help us."

- 23. Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes."
- 24. Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, "I believe. Help my unbelief!"^[218]
- 25. When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!"^[219]
- 26. After crying out and convulsing him greatly, it came out of him. The boy became like one dead, so much that most of them said, "He is dead."
- 27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.
- 28. When he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"
- 29. He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing, except by prayer and fasting."^[220]

9: 30-32 - Jesus Foretells His Passion Again

- 30. They went out from there, and passed through Galilee. He didn't want anyone to know it.
- 31. For he was teaching his disciples, and said to them, "The Son of Man is being handed over to the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, on the third day he will rise again."
- 32. But they didn't understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.^[221]

9: 33-37 - True Greatness

- 33. He came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing among yourselves on the way?"^[222]
- 34. But they were silent, for they had disputed with one another on the way about who was the greatest.
- 35. He sat down, and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."^[223]
- 36. He took a little child, and set him in the middle of them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,
- 37. "Whoever receives one such little child in my name, receives me, and whoever receives me, doesn't receive me, but Him who sent me."^[224]

9: 38-40 - The Strange Exorcist

- 38. John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone who doesn't follow us casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him, because he doesn't follow us."
- 39. But Jesus said, "Don't forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me."
- 40. For whoever is not against us is on our side.^[225]

9: 41-50 - Warnings Concerning Temptations

- 41. For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward
- 42. Whoever will cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if he were thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck.^[226]
- 43. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having your two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire,^[227]
- 44. 'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.'^[228]
- 45. If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life lame, rather than having your two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the fire that will never be quenched^[229]
- 46. 'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.'^[230]
- 47. If your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out. It is better for you to enter into God's Kingdom with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell,^[231]
- 48. 'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.'
- 49. For everyone will be salted with fire,^[232]
- 50. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."^[233]

10: 1-12 - On Adultery and Divorce

1. He arose from there and came into the borders of Judea and beyond the Jordan. Multitudes came together to him again. As he usually did, he was again teaching them.
2. Pharisees came to him testing him, and asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
3. He answered, "What did Moses command you?"
4. They said, "Moses allowed a certificate of divorce to be written, and to divorce her."^[234]
5. But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment.
6. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.
7. For this cause a man will leave his father and mother, and will join to his wife,
8. and the two will become one flesh, so that they are no longer two, but one flesh.
9. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
10. In the house, his disciples asked him again about the same matter.
11. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery against her.
12. If a woman herself divorces her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery."^[235]

10: 13-16 - Jesus Blesses the Children

13. They were bringing to him little children, that he should touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.
14. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said to them, "Allow the little children to come to me! Don't forbid them, for God's Kingdom belongs to such as these.
15. Most certainly I tell you, whoever will not receive God's Kingdom like a little child, he will in no way enter into it."
16. He took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands on them.^[236]

10: 17-22 - The Rich Young Man

17. As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"^[237]
18. Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God."^[238]

19. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder,' 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honour your father and mother.'^[239]
20. He said to him, "Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth."^[240]
21. Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ^[241]
22. But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions.^[242]

10: 23-30 - On Riches and the Rewards of Discipleship

23. Jesus looked around, and said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into God's Kingdom!" ^[243]
24. The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter into God's Kingdom!"^[244]
25. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom."^[245]
26. They were exceedingly astonished, saying to him, "Then who can be saved?"^[246]
27. Jesus, looking at them, said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God."^[247]
28. Peter began to tell him, "Behold, we have left all, and have followed you."^[248]
29. Jesus said, "Most certainly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,
30. but he will receive one hundred times more now in this time: houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life."^[249]

10: 31-34 - The Third Prediction of the Passion

31. But many who are first will be last; and the last first."^[250]
32. They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going in front of them, and they were amazed; and those who followed were afraid. He again took the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him.
33. "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will

condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles.

34. They will mock him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."^[251]

10: 35-45 - Sons of Zebedee; Precedence among the Disciples

35. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came near to him, saying, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask."^[252]

36. He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?"

37. They said to him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left hand, in your glory."^[253]

38. But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?"^[254]

39. They said to him, "We are able." Jesus said to them, "You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptised with the baptism that I am baptized with;

40. but to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but for whom it has been prepared."^[255]

41. When the ten heard it, they began to be indignant toward James and John.^[256]

42. Jesus summoned them, and said to them, "You know that they who are recognised as rulers over the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

43. But it shall not be so among you, but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant.

44. Whoever of you wants to become first among you, shall be bondservant of all.

45. For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."^[257]

10: 46-52 - The Blind Man

46. They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road.

47. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, "Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!"

48. Many rebuked him, that he should be quiet, but he cried out much more, "You son of David^[258], have mercy on me!"

49. Jesus stood still, and said, "Call him." They called the blind man, saying to him, "Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!"

50. He, casting away his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.
51. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Rabboni^[259], that I may see again."
52. Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you well." Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.^[260]

11: 1-11 - The Triumphal Entry

1. When they came near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,^[261]
2. and said to them, "Go your way into the village that is opposite you. Immediately as you enter into it, you will find a young donkey tied, on which no one has sat. Untie him, and bring him.
3. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs him;' and immediately he will send him back here."^[262]
4. They went away, and found a young donkey tied at the door outside in the open street, and they untied him.
5. Some of those who stood there asked them, "What are you doing, untying the young donkey?"
6. They said to them just as Jesus had said, and they let them go.
7. They brought the young donkey to Jesus, and threw their garments on it, and Jesus sat on it.
8. Many spread their garments on the way, and others were cutting down branches from the trees.^[263]
9. Those who went in front, and those who followed, cried out, "Hosanna!^[264] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!^[265]
10. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"^[266]
11. Jesus entered into the temple in Jerusalem. When he had looked around at everything, it being now evening, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

11: 12-14 - Repentance or Destruction

12. The next day, when they had come out from Bethany, he was hungry.
13. Seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came to see if perhaps he might find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.
14. Jesus told it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" and his disciples heard it.^[267]

11:15-17 - The Cleansing of the Temple

15. They came to Jerusalem, and Jesus entered into the temple, and began to throw out those who sold and those who bought in the temple^[268], and overthrew the money changers' tables, and the seats of those who sold the doves.
16. He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple.^[269]
17. He taught, saying to them, "Isn't it written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations?' But you have made it a den of robbers!"^[270]

11: 18 - Chief Priests and Pharisees Counsel against Jesus

18. The chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.^[271]

11: 19-24 - The Fig-Tree Is Withered

19. When evening came, he went out of the city.
20. As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree withered away from the roots.^[272]
21. Peter, remembering, said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig-tree which you cursed has withered away."
22. Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God.
23. For most certainly I tell you, whoever may tell this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and doesn't doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is happening; he shall have whatever he says.^[273]
24. Therefore I tell you, all things whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them.

11: 25-26 - On Murder and Wrath

25. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions.^[274]

26. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions."^[275]

11: 27-33 - The Cleansing of the Temple... continued

- 27. They came again to Jerusalem, and as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him,^[276]
- 28. and they began saying to him, "By what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things?"^[277]
- 29. Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.
- 30. The baptism of John—was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me."
- 31. They reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we should say, 'From heaven;' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'
- 32. If we should say, 'From men'"—they feared the people, for all held John to really be a prophet.
- 33. They answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."^[278]

12: 1-12 - The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

- 1. He began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a pit for the wine press, built a tower, rented it out to a farmer, and went into another country."^[279]
- 2. When it was time, he sent a servant to the farmer to get from the farmer his share of the fruit of the vineyard.
- 3. They took him, beat him, and sent him away empty.
- 4. Again, he sent another servant to them; and they threw stones at him, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated.
- 5. Again he sent another; and they killed him; and many others, beating some, and killing some.^[280]
- 6. Therefore still having one, his beloved son, he sent him last to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'
- 7. But those farmers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'
- 8. They took him, killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.
- 9. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers, and will give the vineyard to others.^[281]
- 10. Haven't you even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected was made the head of the corner.

11. This was from the Lord. It is marvellous in our eyes?'^[282]
12. They tried to seize him, but they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spoke the parable against them. They left him, and went away.^[283]

12: 13-17 - On Paying Tribute to Caesar

13. They sent some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to him, that they might trap him with words.
14. When they had come, they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest, and don't defer to anyone; for you aren't partial to anyone, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"^[284]
15. Shall we give, or shall we not give?" But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test me? Bring me a denarius^[285], that I may see it."
16. They brought it. He said to them, "Whose is this image and inscription?" They said to him, "Caesar's."
17. Jesus answered them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." They marvelled greatly at him.^[286]

12: 18-27 - The Question about the Resurrection

18. Some Sadducees^[287], who say that there is no resurrection, came to him. They asked him, saying,
19. "Teacher, Moses wrote to us, 'If a man's brother dies, and leaves a wife behind him, and leaves no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up offspring for his brother.'
20. There were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying left no offspring.
21. The second took her, and died, leaving no children behind him. The third likewise;
22. and the seven took her and left no children. Last of all the woman also died.
23. In the resurrection, whose wife will she be of them? For the seven had her as a wife."^[288]
24. Jesus answered them, "Isn't this because you are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God?
25. For when they will rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."^[289]
26. But about the dead, that they are raised; haven't you read in the book of Moses, about the Bush, how God spoke to him,

saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

27. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are therefore badly mistaken."^[290]

12: 28-34 - The Great Commandment

28. One of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the greatest of all?"^[291]

29. Jesus answered, "The greatest is, 'Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one:

30. you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'^[292]

31. The second is like this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."^[293]

32. The scribe said to him, "Truly, teacher, you have said well that he is one, and there is none other but he,

33. and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."^[294]

34. When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from God's Kingdom." No one dared ask him any question after that.^[295]

12: 35-37 - The Question about David's Son

35. Jesus responded, as he taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ^[296]

36. For David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet."

37. Therefore David himself calls him Lord, so how can he be his son?" The common people heard him gladly.^[297]

12: 38-40 - Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

38. In his teaching he said to them, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes, and to get greetings in the

- marketplaces,
- 39. and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts:
 - 40. those who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."^[298]

12: 41-44 - The Widow's Mite

- 41. Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and saw how the multitude cast money into the treasury. Many who were rich cast in much.^[299]
- 42. A poor widow came, and she cast in two small coins, which equal a penny.^[300]
- 43. He called his disciples to himself, and said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, this poor widow gave more than all those who are giving into the treasury,
- 44. for they all gave out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on."^[301]

13: 1-2 - Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple

- 1. As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, see what kind of stones and what kind of buildings!"
- 2. Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone on another, which will not be thrown down."^[302]

13: 3-8 - Signs before the End

- 3. As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,
- 4. "Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign that these things are all about to be fulfilled?"
- 5. Jesus, answering, began to tell them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray.
- 6. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and will lead many astray."^[303]
- 7. "When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, don't be troubled. For those must happen, but the end is not yet.
- 8. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be

famines and troubles. These things are the beginning of birth pains.^[304]

13: 9-13 - The Fate of the Disciples

9. But watch yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils. You will be beaten in synagogues. You will stand before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them.
10. The gospel^[305] must first be preached to all the nations.^[306]
11. When they lead you away and deliver you up, don't be anxious beforehand, or premeditate what you will say, but say whatever will be given you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.
12. "Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death.
13. You will be hated by all men for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved.^[307]

13: 14-20 - The Desolating Sacrilege

14. But when you see the desolating sacrilege, standing where it ought not (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,^[308]
15. and let him who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house.
16. Let him who is in the field not return back to take his cloak.
17. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babies in those days!
18. Pray that your flight won't be in the winter.
19. For in those days there will be oppression, such as there has not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be.
20. Unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved; but for the sake of the chosen ones, whom he picked out, he shortened the days.^[309]

13: 21-23 - False Christs and False Prophets

- 21. Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there!' don't believe it.
- 22. For there will arise false christs and false prophets, and will show signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones.
- 23. But you watch. "Behold, I have told you all things beforehand."^[310]

13: 24-27 - The Coming of the Son of Man

- 24. But in those days, after that oppression, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light,^[311]
- 25. the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.
- 26. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
- 27. Then he will send out his angels, and will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky.^[312]

13: 28-32 - The Time of Coming: The Parable of Fig-Tree

- 28. "Now from the fig tree, learn this parable. When the branch has now become tender, and produces its leaves, you know that the summer is near;
- 29. even so you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at the doors.^[313]
- 30. Most certainly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen
- 31. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ^[314]
- 32. But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.^[315]

13: 33-37 - Watchfulness and Faithfulness

- 33. Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don't know when the time is. ^[316]

34. "It is like a man, traveling to another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, and to each one his work, and also commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch.
35. Watch therefore, for you don't know when the lord of the house is coming, whether at evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning;
36. lest coming suddenly he might find you sleeping.
37. What I tell you, I tell all: Watch."^[317]

14: 1-2 - Chief Priests and Pharisees Counsel... again

1. It was now two days before the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might seize him by deception, and kill him.
2. For they said, "Not during the feast, because there might be a riot among the people."^[318]

14: 3-9 - The Woman with the Ointment

3. While he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard—very costly. She broke the jar, and poured it over his head.
4. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, saying, "Why has this ointment been wasted?
5. For this might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,^[319] and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.
6. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for me.
7. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want to, you can do them good; but you will not always have me.
8. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for the burying.
9. Most certainly I tell you, wherever this gospel^[320] may be preached throughout the whole world, that which this woman has done will also be spoken of for a memorial of her."^[321]

14: 10-11 - The Betrayal by Judas

10. Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests, that he might deliver him to them.
11. They, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. He sought how he might conveniently deliver him.^[322]

14: 12-17 - Preparation for the Passover

12. On the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover, his disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare that you may eat the Passover?"^[323]
13. He sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and there a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him,
14. and wherever he enters in, tell the master of the house, "The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'"
15. He will himself show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Get ready for us there."
16. His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found things as he had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.
17. When it was evening he came with the twelve.^[324]

14: 18-21 - Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

18. As they sat and were eating, Jesus said, "Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray me—he who eats with me."^[325]
19. They began to be sorrowful, and to ask him one by one, "Surely not I?" And another said, "Surely not I?"^[326]
20. He answered them, "It is one of the twelve, he who dips with me in the dish.
21. For the Son of Man goes, even as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born."^[327]

14: 22-25 - The Last Supper

22. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had blessed, he broke it, and gave to them, and said, "Take, eat. This is

my body.”^[328]

- 23. He took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them. They all drank of it.
- 24. He said to them, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many.”^[329]
- 25. Most certainly I tell you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew in God’s Kingdom.”^[330]

14: 26-31 - Peter’s Denial Predicted

- 26. When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.^[331]
- 27. Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”^[332]
- 28. However, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.”^[333]
- 29. But Peter said to him, “Although all will be offended, yet I will not.”
- 30. Jesus said to him, “Most certainly I tell you, that you today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”
- 31. But he spoke all the more, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” They all said the same thing.^[334]

14: 32-42 – Gethsemane

- 32. They came to a place which was named Gethsemane^[335]. He said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I pray.”
- 33. He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be astonished^[336] and sore troubled. ^[337]
- 34. He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch.”^[338]
- 35. He went forward a little, and he was falling^[339] on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him.
- 36. He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me. However, not what I desire, but what you desire.”^[340]
- 37. He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you watch one hour?”^[341]

- 38. Watch and pray, that you^[342] may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- 39. Again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words.
- 40. Again he returned, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they didn't know what to answer him.
- 41. He came the third time, and said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."^[343]
- 42. Arise! Let's get going. Behold: he who betrays me is at hand."

14: 43-52 - Jesus' Arrest

- 43. Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came—and with him a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.
- 44. Now he who betrayed him had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I will kiss, that is he. Seize him, and lead him away safely."
- 45. When he had come, immediately he came to him, and said, "Rabbi! Rabbi!" and kissed him.
- 46. They laid their hands on him, and seized him.^[344]
- 47. But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.^[345]
- 48. Jesus answered them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me?"
- 49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you didn't arrest me. But this is so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."^[346]
- 50. They all left him, and fled.^[347]
- 51. A certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth thrown around himself over his naked body. The young men grabbed him,
- 52. but he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.^[348]

14: 53-72 - Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Peter's Denial)

- 53. They led Jesus away to the high priest. All the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes came together with him.^[349]
- 54. Peter had followed him from a distance, until he came into the court of the high priest. He was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire.^[350]

55. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witnesses against Jesus to put him to death, and found none.
56. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony didn't agree with each other. ^[351]
57. Some stood up, and gave false testimony against him, saying,
58. "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" ^[352]
59. Even so, their testimony didn't agree.
60. The high priest stood up in the middle, and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it which these testify against you?" ^[353]
61. But he stayed quiet, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ^[354]
62. Jesus said, "I am. You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of the sky." ^[355]
63. The high priest tore his clothes, and said, "What further need have we of witnesses?
64. You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" They all condemned him to be worthy of death. ^[356]
65. Some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to beat him with fists, and to tell him, "Prophecy!" The officers struck him with the palms of their hands. ^[357]
66. As Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the maids of the high priest came, ^[358]
67. and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You were also with the Nazarene, Jesus!" ^[359]
68. But he denied it, saying, "I neither know, nor understand what you are saying." He went out on the porch, and the rooster crowed.
69. The maid saw him, and began again to tell those who stood by, "This is one of them."
70. But he again denied it. After a little while again those who stood by said to Peter, "You truly are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ^[360]
71. But he began to curse, and to swear, "I don't know this man of whom you speak!"
72. The rooster crowed the second time. Peter remembered the word, how that Jesus said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." When he thought about that, he wept. ^[361]

15: 1-5 - The Trial before Pilate

1. Immediately in the morning the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, bound Jesus, carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. ^[362]

2. Pilate^[363] asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered, "So you say."^[364]
3. The chief priests accused him of many things.
4. Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they testify against you!"
5. But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate marvelled.

15: 6-14 - Jesus or Barabbas

6. Now at the feast he used to release to them one prisoner, whom they asked of him.^[365]
7. There was one called Barabbas, bound with his fellow insurgents, men who in the insurrection had committed murder.^[366]
8. The multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do as he always did for them.
9. Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"
10. For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up.^[367]
11. But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should release Barabbas to them instead.
12. Pilate again asked them, "What then should I do to him whom you call the King of the Jews?"
13. They cried out again, "Crucify him!"^[368]
14. Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they cried out exceedingly, "Crucify him!"

15: 15-20 - Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers

15. Pilate, wishing to please the multitude, released Barabbas to them, and handed over Jesus, when he had flogged him, to be crucified.
16. The soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they called together the whole cohort.
17. They clothed him with purple, and weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on him.
18. They began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
19. They struck his head with a reed, and spat on him, and bowing their knees, did homage to him.
20. When they had mocked him, they took the purple off him, and put his own garments on him. They led him out to crucify

him.^[369]

15: 21-27 - The Crucifixion

21. They compelled one passing by, coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross.^[370]
22. They brought him to the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, "The place of a skull."
23. They offered him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he didn't take it.^[371]
24. Crucifying him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots on them, what each should take.
25. It was the third hour, and they crucified him.^[372]
26. The superscription of his accusation was written over him, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."^[373]
27. With him they crucified two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. ^[374]
28. The Scripture was fulfilled, which says, "He was counted with transgressors." ^[375]

15: 29-32 - Jesus Derided on the Cross

29. Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who destroy the temple, and build it in three days,
30. save yourself, and come down from the cross!"
31. Likewise, also the chief priests mocking among themselves with the scribes said, "He saved others. He can't save himself.
32. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe him." Those who were crucified with him also insulted him.^[376]

15: 33-39 - The 'Death' of Jesus

33. When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.^[377]

34. At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is, being interpreted, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"^[378]
35. Some of those who stood by, when they heard it, said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah."^[379]
36. One ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Let him be. Let's see whether Elijah comes to take him down."^[380]
37. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit.^[381]
38. The veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. ^[382]
39. When the centurion, who stood by opposite him, saw that he cried out like this and breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"^[383]

15: 40-47 - The Burial of Jesus

40. There were also women watching from afar, among whom were both Mary Magdalene,^[384] and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; ^[385]
41. who, when he was in Galilee, followed him and served him; and many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.
42. When evening had now come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,
43. Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member who also himself was looking for God's Kingdom, came. He boldly went in to Pilate, and asked for Jesus' body.^[386]
44. Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead long.^[387]
45. When he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.
46. He bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.^[388]
47. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses, saw where he was laid.

16: 1-8 - The Women at the Tomb

1. When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.^[389]

2. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.^[390]
3. They were saying among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"
4. for it was very big. Looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back.^[391]
5. Entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were amazed.^[392]
6. He said to them, "Don't be amazed. You seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen.^[393] He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him!^[394]
7. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He goes before you into Galilee. There you will see him, as he said to you.'"^[395]
8. They went out, and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come on them. They said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.^[396]

16: 9-20 - The Longer Ending of Mark^[397]

9. Now when he had risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.^[398]
10. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept.
11. When they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they disbelieved.^[399]
12. After these things he was revealed in another form to two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country.^[400]
13. They went away and told it to the rest. They didn't believe them, either.
14. Afterward he was revealed to the eleven themselves as they sat at the table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they didn't believe those who had seen him after he had risen.^[401]
15. He said to them, "Go into all the world, and preach the Good News to the whole creation.^[402]
16. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who disbelieves will be condemned.^[403]
17. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new languages;^[404]
18. they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will in no way hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."^[405]
19. So then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.^[406]
20. They went out, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed.

Amen.

The Gospel According to Matthew

1:1 - Prologue

1. The book of the genealogy^[407] of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.^[408]

1: 2-17 - The Genealogy of Jesus

2. Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac became the father of Jacob. Jacob became the father of Judah and his brothers;
3. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron. Hezron became the father of Ram.
4. Ram became the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon. Nahshon became the father of Salmon;
5. Salmon became the father of Boaz by Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse.
6. Jesse became the father of King David. David became the father of Solomon by her who had been Uriah's wife.
7. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam became the father of Abijah. Abijah became the father of Asa;
8. Asa became the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat became the father of Joram. Joram became the father of Uzziah.
9. Uzziah became the father of Jotham. Jotham became the father of Ahaz. Ahaz became the father of Hezekiah.
10. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh. Manasseh became the father of Amon. Amon became the father of Josiah.
11. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.
12. After the exile to Babylon, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel became the father of Zerubbabel.
13. Zerubbabel became the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim. Eliakim became the father of Azor.
14. Azor became the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim. Achim became the father of Eliud.
15. Eliud became the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan. Matthan became the father of Jacob.
16. Jacob became the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.
17. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the exile to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon to the Christ, fourteen generations.^[409]

1: 18-25 - The Birth of Jesus

18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After his mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit.^[410]
19. Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, intended to put her away secretly.^[411]
20. But when he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take to yourself Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.
21. She shall give birth to a son. You shall name him Jesus, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins."^[412]
22. Now all this has happened that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,
23. "Behold, the virgin^[413] shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel," which is, being interpreted, "God with us."^[414]
24. Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took his wife to himself;
25. and didn't know her sexually until she had given birth to her firstborn son. He named him Jesus.^[415]

2: 1-12 - The Adoration of the Infant Jesus

1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying^[416]
2. "Where is he who is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to pay him homage."^[417]
3. When King Herod^[418] heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.^[419]
4. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he asked them where the Christ would be born.
5. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is written through the prophet,
6. 'You Bethlehem, land of Judah, are in no way least among the princes of Judah; for out of you shall come a governor who shall shepherd my people, Israel.'"^[420]
7. Then Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned from them exactly what time the star appeared.
8. He sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child. When you have found him, bring me word, so that I also may come and pay him homage."^[421]
9. They, having heard the king, went their way; and behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them until it came and stood over where the young child was.^[422]

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.
11. They came into the house and saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and paid him homage.^[423]
Opening their treasures, they offered to him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.^[424]
12. Being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country another way.

2: 13-21 - The Flight into Egypt and Return

13. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."^[425]
14. He arose and took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt,
15. and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called my son."^[426]
16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent out and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under, according to the exact time which he had learned from the wise men.^[427]
17. Then that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying,
18. "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; she wouldn't be comforted, because they are no more."^[428]
19. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying,
20. "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead."
21. He arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

2: 22-23 - The Childhood of Jesus at Nazareth

22. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee,^[429]
23. and came and lived in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets that he will be

called a Nazarene.^[430]

3: 1-6 - John the Baptist

1. In those days, John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,^[431]
2. "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"^[432]
3. For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make the way of the Lord ready! Make his paths straight!"^[433]
4. Now John himself wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.^[434]
5. Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him.
6. They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.^[435]

3: 7-10 - John's Preaching of Repentance

7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees^[436] and Sadducees^[437] coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"^[438]
8. Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance!
9. Don't think to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.^[439]
10. Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire.^[440]

3: 11-12 - John's Messianic Preaching

11. "I indeed baptize you in water for repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit^[441] and with fire.^[442]
12. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn,

but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.”^[443]

3: 13-17 - The Baptism of Jesus

13. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.^[444]
14. But John would have hindered him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?”^[445]
15. But Jesus, answering, said to him, “Allow it now, for this is the fitting way for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he allowed him.
16. Jesus, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him.
17. Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”^[446]

4: 1-11 - The Temptation

1. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.^[447]
2. When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward. ^[448]
3. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”
4. But he answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’”^[449]
5. Then the devil took him into the holy city. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple,
6. and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and, ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you don’t dash your foot against a stone.’”^[450]
7. Jesus said to him, “Again, it is written, ‘You shall not test the Lord, your God.’”^[451]
8. Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
9. He said to him, “I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me.”
10. Then Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.’”^[452]

11. Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and served him.

4: 12-17 - Ministry in Galilee

12. Now when Jesus heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee.
13. Leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,
14. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
15. "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,
16. the people who sat in darkness saw a great light; to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned."^[453]
17. From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

4: 18-22 - The Call of the Disciples

18. Walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers: Simon,^[454] who is called Peter, and Andrew^[455], his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.
19. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men."^[456]
20. They immediately left their nets and followed him.
21. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James^[457] the son of Zebedee, and John^[458] his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them.
22. They immediately left the boat and their father, and followed him.^[459]

4: 23-25 - Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea

23. Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.
24. The report about him went out into all Syria. They brought to him all who were sick, afflicted with various diseases and

torments, possessed with demons, epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them.

25. Great multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis^[460], Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

5: 1-12 - The Sermon on the Mount/Beatitudes

1. Seeing the multitudes, he went up onto the mountain. When he had sat down, his disciples came to him.
2. He opened his mouth and taught them, saying,
3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven^[461]
4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.^[462]
5. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth^[463]
6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.^[464]
7. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.^[465]
8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.^[466]
9. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.^[467]
10. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.^[468]
11. Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake
12. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.^[469]

5: 13-16 - The Light of the World

13. "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavour, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men.^[470]
14. You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can't be hidden.
15. Neither do you light a lamp and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house.
16. Even so, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.^[471]

5: 17-20 - On the Law and the Prophets

- 17. "Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfil. ^[472]
- 18. For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law, until all things are accomplished. ^[473]
- 19. Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. ^[474]
- 20. For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. ^[475]

5: 21-26 - On Murder and Wrath

- 21. "You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, 'You shall not murder;' and 'Whoever murders will be in danger of the judgement.'
- 22. But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother ^[476] without a cause will be in danger of the judgment. Whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' ^[477] will be in danger of the council. ^[478] Whoever says, 'You fool!' ^[479] will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna. ^[480]
- 23. "If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you,
- 24. leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ^[481]
- 25. Agree with your adversary quickly while you are with him on the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison.
- 26. Most certainly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny. ^[482]

5: 27-32 - On Adultery and Divorce

- 27. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;
- 28. but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. ^[483]

29. If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.
30. If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off, and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.^[484]
31. "It was also said, 'Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce,'
32. but I tell you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality,^[485] makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.^[486]

5: 33-37 - On Oaths

33. "Again you have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall perform to the Lord your vows,'
34. but I tell you, don't swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God;
35. nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.
36. Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can't make one hair white or black.
37. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No.' Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.^[487]

5: 38-42 - On Retaliation

38. "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'
39. But I tell you, don't resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.
40. If anyone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.
41. Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.
42. Give to him who asks you, and don't turn away him who desires to borrow from you.^[488]

5: 43-48 - On Love of One's Enemies

- 43. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"
- 44. But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you,
- 45. that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.
- 46. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same?
- 47. If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don't even the Gentiles^[489] do the same?
- 48. Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.^[490]

6: 1-4 - On Almsgivings

- 1. "Be careful that you don't do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.
- 2. Therefore, when you do merciful deeds, don't sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- 3. But when you do merciful deeds, don't let your left hand know what your right hand does,
- 4. so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[491]

6: 5-6 - On Prayer

- 5. "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward.
- 6. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[492]

6: 7-15 - The Lord's Prayer

7. In praying, don't use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking.^[493]
8. Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need before you ask him.
9. Pray like this: "'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.
10. Let your Kingdom come.^[494] Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.^[495]
11. Give us today our daily bread.^[496]
12. Forgive us our debts,
13. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.^[497]
14. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
15. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.^[498]

6: 16-18 - On Fasting

16. "Moreover when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward.
17. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,
18. so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you."^[499]

6: 19-21 - On Treasures

19. "Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal;
20. but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal;
21. for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."^[500]

6: 22-24 - The Sound Eye

22. "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light.
23. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!^[501]
24. No one can serve two masters;^[502] for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Mammon."^[503]

6: 25-34 - On Anxiety

25. "Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?
26. See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they?^[504]
27. "Which of you by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan?
28. Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin,
29. yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these.
30. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?
31. "Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?'
32. For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.^[505]
33. But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.
34. Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient."^[506]

7: 1-5 - On Judging

1. "Don't judge, so that you won't be judged.
2. For with whatever judgement you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you.
3. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye?
4. Or how will you tell your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' and behold, the beam is in your own eye?

5. You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye."^[507]

7: 6-11 - God's Answering of Prayer

6. "Don't give that which is holy^[508] to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."^[509]
7. "Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you.
8. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.
9. Or who is there among you who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?
10. Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent?
11. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"^[510]

7: 12-14 - The Golden Rule & Exclusion from the Kingdom

12. Therefore, whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.^[511]
13. "Enter in by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter in by it.
14. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it."^[512]

7: 15-20 - "By their Fruits..."

15. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. ^[513]
16. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?
17. Even so, every good tree produces good fruit, but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit.
18. A good tree can't produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit.

- 19. Every tree that doesn't grow good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- 20. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."^[514]

7: 21-23 - "Saying Lord, Lord"

- 21. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
- 22. Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?'
- 23. Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.'"^[515]

7: 24-27 - The House Built upon the Rock

- 24. "Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock.
- 25. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it didn't fall, for it was founded on the rock.
- 26. Everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
- 27. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell—and its fall was great."^[516]

7: 28-29 - Teaching in the Synagogue at Capernaum

- 28. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching,
- 29. for he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes. ^[517]

8: 1-4 - The Cleansing of the Leper

1. When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.
2. Behold, a leper came to him and was kneeling down to^[518] him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."
3. Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I want to. Be made clean." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.
4. Jesus said to him, "See that you tell nobody; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."^[519]

8: 5-13 - The Centurion of Capernaum

5. When he came into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking him for help,
6. saying, Lord, my child^[520] lies in the house paralysed, grievously tormented."
7. Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."
8. The centurion answered, "Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.
9. For I am also a man under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and tell another, 'Come,' and he comes; and tell my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."
10. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled and said to those who followed, "Most certainly I tell you, I haven't found so great a faith, not even in Israel.
11. I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven,
12. but the sons of the kingdom^[521] will be thrown out into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
13. Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. Let it be done for you as you have believed." His servant was healed in that hour.^[522]

8: 14-15 - The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law

14. When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick^[523] of a fever.
15. He touched her hand, and the fever left her. So she got up and served him.^[524]

8: 16-17 - The Sick Healed at Evening

16. When evening came, they brought to him many possessed with demons. He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,
17. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."^[525]

8: 18-22 - On Following Jesus

18. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes around him, he gave the order to depart to the other side.
19. A scribe came and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."
20. Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."^[526]
21. Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father."
22. But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."^[527]

8: 23-27 - Stilling the Storm

23. When he got into a boat, his disciples followed him.
24. Behold, a violent storm came up on the sea, so much that the boat was covered with the waves; but he was asleep.
25. The disciples came to him and woke him up, saying, "Save us, Lord! We are dying!"
26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.
27. And the men marvelled, saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"^[528]

8: 28-34 - The Gadarene Demonics

28. When he came to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, two people possessed by demons met him there, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that nobody could pass that way.
29. Behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"
30. Now there was a herd of many pigs feeding far away from them.
31. The demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of pigs."
32. He said to them, "Go!". They came out, and went into the herd of pigs; and behold, the whole herd of pigs rushed down the cliff into the sea and died in the water.
33. Those who fed them fled and went away into the city and told everything, including what happened to those who were possessed with demons.
34. Behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged that he would depart from their borders.^[529]

9: 1-8 - The Healing of the Paralytic

1. He entered into a boat and crossed over, and came into his own city.
2. Behold, they brought to him a man who was paralysed, lying on a bed. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you."
3. Behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man blasphemes."
4. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?
5. For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven;' or to say, 'Get up, and walk?'
6. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—" (then he said to the paralytic), "Get up, and take up your mat, and go to your house.""
7. He arose and departed to his house.
8. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.^[530]

9: 9-13 - The Call of Levi (Matthew)

9. As Jesus passed by from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax collection office. He said to him, "Follow me." He got up and followed him.
10. As he sat in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.
11. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"
12. When Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do.
13. But you go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."^[531]

9: 14-17 - The Question about Fasting

14. Then John's disciples came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast?"
15. Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."^[532]
16. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch would tear away from the garment, and a worse hole is made.
17. Neither do people put new wine into old wine skins, or else the skins would burst, and the wine be spilled, and the skins ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wine skins, and both are preserved."^[533]

9: 18-26 - Jairus' Daughter & the Woman with Haemorrhage

18. While he told these things to them, behold, a ruler came and kneeling before^[534] him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."^[535]
19. Jesus got up and followed him, as did his disciples.
20. Behold, a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years came behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment;^[536]
21. for she said within herself, "If I just touch his garment, I will be made well."
22. But Jesus, turning around and seeing her, said, "Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. ^[537]
23. When Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd in noisy disorder,

- 24. he said to them, "Make room, because the girl isn't dead, but sleeping." They were ridiculing him.
- 25. But when the crowd was sent out, he entered in, took her by the hand, and the girl arose.
- 26. The report of this went out into all that land.^[538]

9: 27-31 - The Two Blind Men

- 27. As Jesus passed by from there, two blind men followed him, calling out and saying, "Have mercy on us, son of David!"^[539]
- 28. When he had come into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"
They told him, "Yes, Lord."
- 29. Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you."
- 30. Then their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly commanded them, saying, "See that no one knows about this."
- 31. But they went out and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

9: 32-34 - The Dumb Demonic

- 32. As they went out, behold, a mute man who was demon possessed was brought to him.^[540]
- 33. When the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke. The multitudes marvelled, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!"
- 34. But the Pharisees said, "By the prince of the demons, he casts out demons."^[541]

9: 35-38 - The Harvest Is Great

- 35. Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.^[542]
- 36. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.
- 37. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the labourers are few.

38. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out labourers into his harvest."^[543]

10: 1-16 - Commissioning the Twelve

1. He called to himself his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every sickness.^[544]
2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, his brother;
3. Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus; Lebbaeus, who was also called Thaddaeus;
4. Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.
5. Jesus sent these twelve out and commanded them, saying, "Don't go among the Gentiles, and don't enter into any city of the Samaritans
6. Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."^[545]
7. As you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!'
8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you received, so freely give.
9. Don't take any gold, silver, or brass in your money belts.
10. Take no bag for your journey, neither two coats, nor sandals, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food.^[546]
11. Into whatever city or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you go on.
12. As you enter into the household, greet it.
13. If the household is worthy, let your peace come on it, but if it isn't worthy, let your peace return to you.
14. Whoever doesn't receive you or hear your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.
15. Most certainly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for that city.^[547]
16. "Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."^[548]

10: 17-25 - The Fate of the Disciples

17. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you.
18. Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations.^[549]
19. But when they deliver you up, don't be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say.
20. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.^[550]
21. "Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.
22. You will be hated by all men for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved.
23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for most certainly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man has come.^[551]
24. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord.
25. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!^[552]

10: 26-33 - Exhortation to Fearless Confession

26. Therefore don't be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.
27. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops.
28. Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.
29. "Aren't two sparrows sold for an assarion coin? Not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.
30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31. Therefore don't be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows.^[553]
32. Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.
33. But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."^[554]

10: 34-36 - Divisions within Households

- 34. "Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn't come to send peace, but a sword.
- 35. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
- 36. A man's foes will be those of his own household.^[555]

10: 37-39 - Conditions of Discipleship

- 37. "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me.^[556]
- 38. He who doesn't take his cross and follow after me isn't worthy of me.
- 39. He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake will find it."^[557]

10: 40-42 - Rewards of Discipleship

- 40. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me.
- 41. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward.
- 42. Whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward."^[558]

11: 1-6 - John the Baptist's Question and Jesus' Answer

- 1. When Jesus had finished directing his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.
- 2. Now when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples
- 3. and said to him, "Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?"^[559]
- 4. Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

5. the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.
6. Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me.”^[560]

11: 7-19 - Jesus' Witness Concerning John

7. As these went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?
8. But what did you go out to see? A man in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.
9. But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet.
10. For this is he, of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’^[561]
11. Most certainly I tell you, among those who are born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptizer; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.^[562]
12. From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.^[563]
13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.^[564]
14. If you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come.^[565]
15. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
16. “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces, who call to their companions
17. and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you didn’t dance. We mourned for you, and you didn’t lament.’
18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’
19. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her deeds.”^[566]

11: 20-24 - Woes Pronounced on Galilean Cities

20. Then he began to denounce the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, because they didn’t repent.

21. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
22. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.
23. You, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, you will go down to Hades. For if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in you, it would have remained until today.
24. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgement, than for you."^[567]

11: 25-27 - Jesus' Thanksgiving to the Father

25. At that time, Jesus answered, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to infants."^[568]
26. yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.
27. All things have been delivered to me by my Father. No one knows the Son, except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father, except the Son and he to whom the Son desires to reveal him."^[569]

11: 28-30 - "Come unto Me..."

28. "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.
29. Take my yoke^[570] upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls.
30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."^[571]

12: 1-8 - Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

1. At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat."^[572]
2. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, "Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."^[573]

3. But he said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him:
4. how he entered into God's house and ate the show bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?[574]
5. Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?
6. But I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.[575]
7. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you wouldn't have condemned the guiltless.[576]
8. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."[577]

12: 9-14 - The Man with the Withered Hand

9. He departed from there and went into their synagogue.[578]
10. And behold, there was a man with a withered hand. They asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" so that they might accuse him.
11. He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if this one falls into a pit on the Sabbath day, won't he grab on to it and lift it out?[579]
12. Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day."
13. Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out; and it was restored whole, just like the other.
14. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how they might destroy him.[580]

12: 15-21 - Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea

15. Jesus, perceiving that, withdrew from there. Great multitudes followed him; and he healed them all,
16. and commanded them that they should not make him known,
17. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
18. "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit on him. He will proclaim justice to the nations.[581]
19. He will not strive, nor shout, neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

- 20. He won't break a bruised reed. He won't quench a smoking flax, until he leads justice to victory.
- 21. And in his name shall the nations hope." In his name, the nations will hope."^[582]

12: 22-30 - On Collusion with Satan

- 22. Then one possessed by a demon, blind and mute, was brought to him; and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.
- 23. All the multitudes were amazed, and said, "Can this be the son of David?"
- 24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons."^[583]
- 25. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.
- 26. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
- 27. If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.
- 28. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then God's Kingdom has come upon you.
- 29. Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? Then he will plunder his house.
- 30. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn't gather with me, scatters."^[584]

12: 31-37 - The Sin against the Holy Spirit

- 31. "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.
- 32. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in that which is to come."^[585]
- 33. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit.
- 34. You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

35. The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things.
[586]
36. I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgement.
37. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”[587]

12: 38-42 - The Sign of Jonah

38. Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”
39. But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.
40. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the huge fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”[588]
41. The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgement with this generation and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, someone greater than Jonah is here.
42. The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgement with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, someone greater than Solomon is here.”

12: 43-45 - The Return of the Evil Spirit

43. “When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, and doesn’t find it.”
44. Then he says, ‘I will return into my house from which I came;’ and when he has come back, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.
45. Then he goes and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than he is, and they enter in and dwell there. The last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Even so will it be also to this evil generation.”[589]

12: 46-50 - Jesus’ True Kindred

46. While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him.
47. One said to him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you."^[590]
48. But he answered him who spoke to him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"
49. He stretched out his hand toward his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers!
50. For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."^[591]

13: 1-9 - The Parable of the Sower

1. On that day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the seaside.
2. Great multitudes gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach.
3. He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, a farmer went out to sow.
4. As he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, and the birds came and devoured them.
5. Others fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth.
6. When the sun had risen, they were scorched. Because they had no root, they withered away.
7. Others fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them.
8. Others fell on good soil and yielded fruit: some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty.
9. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."^[592]

13: 10-17 - The Reason for Speaking in Parables

10. The disciples came, and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"
11. He answered them, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them.
12. For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever doesn't have, from him will be taken away even that which he has.
13. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they don't see, and hearing, they don't hear, neither do they understand.

14. In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, 'By hearing you will hear, and will in no way understand; Seeing you will see, and will in no way perceive;
15. for this people's heart has grown callous, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes; or else perhaps they might perceive with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and would turn again, and I would heal them.'^[593]
16. "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.
17. For most certainly I tell you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which you see, and didn't see them; and to hear the things which you hear, and didn't hear them."^[594]

13: 18-23 - Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower

18. "Hear, then, the parable of the sower.
19. When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside.
20. What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately with joy receives it;
21. yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.
22. What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.
23. What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word and understands it, who most certainly bears fruit and produces, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty."^[595]

13: 24-30 - The Parable of the Tares

24. He set another parable before them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field,
25. but while people slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel weeds also among the wheat, and went away.
26. But when the blade sprang up and produced grain, then the darnel weeds appeared also.

27. The servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did these darnel weeds come from?'
28. "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?'
29. "But he said, 'No, lest perhaps while you gather up the darnel weeds, you root up the wheat with them.
30. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First, gather up the darnel weeds, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."^[596]

13: 31-32 - The Parable of the Mustard Seed

31. He set another parable before them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took, and sowed in his field,
32. which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches."^[597]

13: 33 - The Parable of the Leaven

33. He spoke another parable to them. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until it was all leavened."^[598]

13: 34-35 - Jesus' Use of Parables

34. Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the multitudes; and without a parable, he didn't speak to them,
35. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."^[599]

13: 36-43 - Interpretation of the Parable of the Tares

36. Then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house. His disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the darnel weeds of the field."
37. He answered them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,
38. the field is the world, the good seeds are the children of the Kingdom, and the darnel weeds are the children of the evil one.
39. The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.
40. As therefore the darnel weeds are gathered up and burned with fire; so will it be at the end of this age.
41. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and those who do iniquity,
42. and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
43. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."^[600]

13: 44-46 - The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl

44. "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
45. "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls,
46. who having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."^[601]

13: 47-50 - The Parable of the Net

47. "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some fish of every kind,
48. which, when it was filled, fishermen drew up on the beach. They sat down and gathered the good into containers, but the bad they threw away
49. So will it be in the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked from among the righteous,
50. and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."^[602]

13: 51-52 - Treasures New and Old

51. Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They answered him, "Yes, Lord."
52. He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been made a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a householder, who brings out of his treasure new and old things."^[603]

13: 53-58 - Jesus' Preaching in Nazareth

53. When Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there.
54. Coming into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue,^[604] so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"
55. Isn't this the carpenter's son?^[605] Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? ^[606]
56. Aren't all of his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all of these things?"
57. They were offended by him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country and in his own house."
58. He didn't do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.^[607]

14: 1-12 - The Death of John the Baptist

1. At that time, Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus,
2. and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptizer. He is risen from the dead. That is why these powers work in him."^[608]
3. For Herod had arrested John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.
4. For John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."
5. When he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.
6. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced among them and pleased Herod.
7. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask.
8. She, being prompted by her mother, said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptizer."

9. The king was grieved, but for the sake of his oaths and of those who sat at the table with him, he commanded it to be given,
10. and he sent and beheaded John in the prison.
11. His head was brought on a platter and given to the young lady; and she brought it to her mother.
12. His disciples came, took the body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.^[609]

14: 13-21 - Five Thousand Are Fed

13. Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place apart. When the multitudes heard it, they followed him on foot from the cities.^[610]
14. Jesus went out, and he saw a great multitude. He had compassion on them and healed their sick.^[611]
15. When evening had come, his disciples came to him, saying, "This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food."
16. But Jesus said to them, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."
17. They told him, "We only have here five loaves and two fish."^[612]
18. He said, "Bring them here to me."
19. He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.
20. They all ate and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of that which remained left over from the broken pieces.
21. Those who ate were about five thousand men, in addition to women and children.

14: 22-33 - The Walking on Water

22. Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.
23. After he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain by himself to pray. When evening had come, he was there alone.
24. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

25. In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.
26. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It's a ghost!" and they cried out for fear.
27. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Cheer up! It is I! Don't be afraid."
28. Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters."
29. He said, "Come!" Peter stepped down from the boat and walked on the waters to come to Jesus.
30. But when he saw that the wind was strong, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"
31. Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand, took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
32. When they got up into the boat, the wind ceased.
33. Those who were in the boat came and paid homage^[613] to him, saying, "You are truly the Son of God!"^[614]

14: 34-36 - Healing at Gennesaret

34. When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.
35. When the people of that place recognised him, they sent into all that surrounding region and brought to him all who were sick;
36. and they begged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment. As many as touched it were made whole.^[615]

15: 1-20 - Defilement – Traditional and Real

1. Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying,
2. "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat."^[616]
3. He answered them, "Why do you also disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?
4. For God commanded, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'
5. But you say, 'Whoever may tell his father or his mother, "Whatever help you might otherwise have gotten from me is a gift devoted to God,"
6. he shall not honour his father or mother.' You have made the commandment of God void because of your tradition.

7. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,
8. 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
9. And in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine rules made by men.'"[617]
10. He summoned the multitude, and said to them, "Hear, and understand.
11. That which enters into the mouth doesn't defile the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."
12. Then the disciples came, and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"
13. But he answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father didn't plant will be uprooted.
14. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit."[618]
15. Peter answered him, "Explain the parable to us."
16. So Jesus said, "Do you also still not understand?
17. Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the belly and then out of the body?
18. But the things which proceed out of the mouth come out of the heart, and they defile the man.[619]
19. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual sins, thefts, false testimony, and blasphemies.
20. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands doesn't defile the man."[620]

15: 21-28 - The Syrophoenician (Canaanite) Woman

21. Jesus went out from there and withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon.[621]
22. Behold, a Canaanite woman came out from those borders and cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, you son of David! My daughter is severely possessed by a demon!"[622]
23. But he answered her not a word. His disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away; for she cries after us."
24. But he answered, "I wasn't sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[623]
25. But she came and was kneeling by[624] him, saying, "Lord, help me."
26. But he answered, "It is not appropriate to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."
27. But she said, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."
28. Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you even as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that hour.[625]

15: 29-31 - Jesus Heals a Deaf Mute and Many Others

29. Jesus departed from there and came near to the Sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain and sat there.
30. Great multitudes came to him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others, and they put them down at his feet. He healed them,
31. so that the multitude wondered when they saw the mute speaking, the injured healed, the lame walking, and the blind seeing—and they glorified the God of Israel.^[626]

15: 32-39 - Four Thousand Are Fed

32. Jesus summoned his disciples and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with me now three days and have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away fasting, or they might faint on the way.”
33. The disciples said to him, “Where could we get so many loaves in a deserted place as to satisfy so great a multitude?”
34. Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.”
35. He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground;
36. and he took the seven loaves and the fish. He gave thanks and broke them, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.
37. They all ate and were filled. They took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over.
38. Those who ate were four thousand men, in addition to women and children.
39. Then he sent away the multitudes, got into the boat, and came into the borders of Magdala.^[627]

16: 1-4 - The Sign of Jonah

1. The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing him, asked him to show them a sign from heaven.^[628]
2. But he answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’
3. In the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you can’t discern the signs of the times!

4. An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there will be no sign given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah." He left them and departed.^[629]

16: 5-12 - The Leaven of the Pharisees

5. The disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread.
6. Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."^[630]
7. They reasoned among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread."
8. Jesus, perceiving it, said, "Why do you reason among yourselves, you of little faith, because you have brought no bread?"
9. Don't you yet perceive or remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up,
10. or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up?
11. How is it that you don't perceive that I didn't speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
12. Then they understood that he didn't tell them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.^[631]

16: 13-20 - Peter's Confession

13. Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?"
14. They said, "Some say John the Baptizer, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
15. He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
16. Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
17. Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
18. I also tell you that you are the Rock^[632] (Peter), and upon this rock^[633] I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades^[634] will not prevail against it.

19. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
20. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.^[635]

16: 21-23 - Jesus Foretells His Passion

21. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.
22. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This will never be done to you."
23. But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men."^[636]

16: 24-28 - "If Any Man Would Come after Me..."

24. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.
25. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it.
26. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?
27. For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds.
28. Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."^[637]

17: 1-9 - The Transfiguration

1. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves.
2. He was changed before them. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as the light.

3. Behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him.
4. Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you want, let's make three tents here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
5. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. Behold, a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him."^[638]
6. When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were very afraid.
7. Jesus came and touched them and said, "Get up, and don't be afraid."
8. Lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus alone.^[639]
9. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Don't tell anyone what you saw, until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."^[640]

17: 10-13 - The Coming of Elijah

10. His disciples asked him, saying, "Then why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
11. Jesus answered them, "Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all things;
12. but I tell you that Elijah has come already, and they didn't recognise him, but did to him whatever they wanted to. Even so the Son of Man will also suffer by them."
13. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptizer.^[641]

17: 14-20 - Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by a Spirit

14. When they came to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling down to him and saying,
15. "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is epileptic and suffers grievously; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water.^[642]
16. So I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him."
17. Jesus answered, "Faithless and perverse generation! How long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him here to me."

18. Jesus rebuked it;^[643] and the demon went out of him: and the boy was cured from that hour.^[644]
19. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, "Why weren't we able to cast it out?"
20. He said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For most certainly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.
21. But this kind doesn't go out except by prayer and fasting."^[645]

17: 22-33 - Jesus Foretells His Passion Again

22. While they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The son of man is about^[646] to be delivered up into the hands of men
23. and they will kill him, and the third day he will be raised up." They were exceedingly sorry.^[647]

17: 24-27 - Payment of the Temple Tax

24. When they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the didrachma^[648] coins came to Peter, and said, "Doesn't your teacher pay the didrachma?"
25. He said, "Yes." When he came into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive toll or tribute? From their children, or from strangers?"
26. Peter said to him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Therefore the children are exempt.
27. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take up the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater coin. Take that, and give it to them for me and you."^[649]

18: 1-5 - True Greatness

1. In that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"
2. Jesus called a little child to himself, and set him in the middle of them
3. and said, "Most certainly I tell you, unless you turn and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. Whoever therefore humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.^[650]
5. Whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me,^[651]

18: 6-9 - Warnings Concerning Temptations

6. "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a huge millstone were hung around his neck and that he were sunk in the depths of the sea.
7. "Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling! For it must be that the occasions come, but woe to that person through whom the occasion comes!
8. If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or crippled, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire.
9. If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire."^[652]

18: 10-14 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

10. See that you don't despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.
11. For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.^[653]
12. "What do you think? If a man has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that which has gone astray?
13. If he finds it, most certainly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.
14. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."^[654]

18: 15-18 - On Reproving One's Brother

15. "If your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained back

your brother.

16. But if he doesn't listen, take one or two more with you, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
17. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembly. If he refuses to hear the assembly also, let him be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector.^[655]
18. Most certainly I tell you, whatever things you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever things you release on earth will have been released in heaven.^[656]

18: 19-20 - "Two or Three Are Gathered Together..."

19. Again, assuredly I tell you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven.
20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them."^[657]

18: 21-22 - On Reconciliation

21. Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?"
22. Jesus said to him, "I don't tell you until seven times, but, until seventy times seven."^[658]

18: 23-35 - The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

23. "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.
24. When he had begun to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.
25. But because he couldn't pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.
26. The servant therefore fell down and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will repay you all!'

27. The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt.
28. "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'
29. "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you!'
30. He would not, but went and cast him into prison until he should pay back that which was due.
31. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done.
32. Then his lord called him in and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.
33. Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?'
34. His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him.
35. So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don't each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds."^[659]

19: 1-13 - On Adultery and Divorce

1. When Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee and came into the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan.
2. Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there.
3. Pharisees came to him, testing him and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"^[660]
4. He answered, "Haven't you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female
5. and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?'
6. So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don't let man tear apart."^[661]
7. They asked him, "Why then did Moses command us to give her a certificate of divorce and divorce her?"
8. He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so.
9. I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries her when she is divorced commits adultery."^[662]
10. His disciples said to him, "If this is the case of the man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry."
11. But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this saying, but those to whom it is given. ^[663]
12. For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by

men; and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it."^[664]

19: 13-15 - Jesus Blesses the Children

13. Then little children were brought to him that he should lay his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.
14. But Jesus said, "Allow the little children, and don't forbid them to come to me; for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to ones like these."
15. He laid his hands on them, and departed from there.^[665]

19: 16-22 - The Rich Young Man

16. Behold, one came to him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"
17. He said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."^[666]
18. He said to him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder.' 'You shall not commit adultery.' 'You shall not steal.' 'You shall not offer false testimony.'
19. 'Honour your father and your mother.' And, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"^[667]
20. The young man said to him, "All these things I have observed from my youth. What do I still lack?"^[668]
21. Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."^[669]
22. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he was one who had great possessions.

19: 23-29 - On Riches and the Rewards of Discipleship

23. Jesus said to his disciples, "Most certainly I say to you, a rich man will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven with difficulty. ^[670]
24. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom."^[671]

- 25. When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"
- 26. Looking at them, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." [672]
- 27. Then Peter answered, "Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" [673]
- 28. Jesus said to them, "Most certainly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [674]
- 29. Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life.

19: 30 – 20: 1-15 - Parable of the Labourer in the Vineyard

- 30. "But many will be last who are first, and first who are last." [675]
- 1. "For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. [676]
- 2. When he had agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [677]
- 3. He went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. [678]
- 4. He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went their way.
- 5. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. [679]
- 6. About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle. He said to them, 'Why do you stand here all day idle?'
- 7. "They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' "He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard' [680]
- 8. "When evening had come, the lord [681] of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.'
- 9. "When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. [682]
- 10. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every man a shilling.
- 11. When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household,
- 12. saying, 'These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat!'
- 13. "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a denarius?'

14. Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you.
15. Isn't it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?'^[683]
16. So the last will be first, and the first last."^[684]

20: 17-19 - The Third Prediction of the Passion

17. As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them,
18. "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death,
19. and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day he will be raised up."^[685]

20: 20-28 - The Sons of Zebedee; Precedence among Disciples

20. Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, kneeling and asking a certain thing of him.^[686]
21. He said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these, my two sons, may sit, one on your right hand and one on your left hand, in your Kingdom."
22. But Jesus answered, "You don't know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to him, "We are able."
23. He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give, but it is for whom it has been prepared by my Father."
24. When the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers.
25. But Jesus summoned them, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles^[687] lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.
26. It shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant
27. Whoever desires to be first among you shall be your bondservant,
28. even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

20: 29-34 - The Two Blind Men

29. As they went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.^[688]
30. Behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, you son of David!"
31. The multitude rebuked them, telling them that they should be quiet, but they cried out even more, "Lord, have mercy on us, you son of David!"^[689]
32. Jesus stood still and called them, and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"
33. They told him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."
34. Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received their sight, and they followed him.^[690]

21: 1-9 - The Triumphal Entry

1. When they came near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,^[691]
2. saying to them, "Go into the village that is opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.
3. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and immediately he will send them."^[692]
4. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,
5. "Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King comes to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."^[693]
6. The disciples went and did just as Jesus commanded them,
7. and brought the donkey and the colt and laid their clothes on them; and he sat on them.
8. A very great multitude spread their clothes on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ^[694]
9. The multitudes who went in front of him, and those who followed, kept shouting, "Hosanna^[695] to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"^[696]

21: 10-17 - The Cleansing of the Temple

10. When he had come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"
11. The multitudes said, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."
12. Jesus entered into the temple of God and drove out all of those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the money changers' tables and the seats of those who sold the doves.^[697]
13. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers!"^[698]
14. The lame and the blind came to him in the temple, and he healed them.
15. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children who were crying in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the son of David!" they were indignant,
16. and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes. Did you never read, 'Out of the mouth of children and nursing babies, you have perfected praise?'"^[699]
17. He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and camped there.

21: 18-19 - Repentance or Destruction

18. Now in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry.
19. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it but leaves. He said to it, "Let there be no fruit from you forever!" Immediately the fig tree withered away.^[700]

21: 20-22 - The Fig-Tree Is Withered

20. When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree immediately wither away?"
21. Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, if you have faith and don't doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you told this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it would be done.
22. All things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."^[701]

21: 23-27 - The Cleansing of the Temple... continued

23. When he had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?"^[702]
24. Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.
25. The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?" They reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'
26. But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all hold John as a prophet."
27. They answered Jesus, and said, "We don't know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."^[703]

21: 28-32 - The Parable of the Two Sons

28. But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.'
29. He answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind, and went.
30. He came to the second, and said the same thing. He answered, 'I'm going, sir,' but he didn't go.
31. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Most certainly I tell you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering into God's Kingdom before you.
32. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. When you saw it, you didn't even repent afterward, that you might believe him."^[704]

21: 33-46 - The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

33. "Hear another parable. There was a man who was a master of a household who planted a vineyard, set a hedge about it, dug a wine press in it, built a tower, leased it out to farmers, and went into another country.
34. When the season for the fruit came near, he sent his servants to the farmers to receive his fruit.
35. The farmers took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned another.
36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they treated them the same way.

37. But afterward he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.'
38. But the farmers, when they saw the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and seize his inheritance.'
39. So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard, then killed him.
40. When therefore the lord^[705] of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?"^[706]
41. They told him, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will lease out the vineyard to other farmers who will give him the fruit in its season."^[707]
42. Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures,' 'The stone which the builders rejected was made the head of the corner. This was from the Lord. It is marvellous in our eyes'?
43. "Therefore I tell you, God's Kingdom will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruit."^[708]
44. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it will fall, it will scatter him as dust."^[709]
45. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke about them.
46. When they sought to seize him, they feared the multitudes, because they considered him to be a prophet.

22: 1-14 - The Parable of the Great Supper

1. Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying,^[710]
2. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who made a wedding feast for his son,
3. and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come."^[711]
4. Again he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My cattle and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding feast!"'
5. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise;
6. and the rest grabbed his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ^[712]
7. When the king heard that, he was angry, and sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
8. "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited weren't worthy.
9. Go therefore to the intersections of the highways, and as many as you may find, invite to the wedding feast.'
10. Those servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. The wedding was filled with guests."^[713]

11. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who didn't have on wedding clothing,
12. and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not wearing wedding clothing?' He was speechless.
13. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and throw him into the outer darkness. That is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be.'
14. For many are called, but few chosen."^[714]

22: 15-22 - On Paying Tribute to Caesar

15. Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how they might entrap him in his talk.
16. They sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are honest, and teach the way of God in truth, no matter whom you teach; for you aren't partial to anyone.
17. Tell us therefore, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"^[715]
18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test me, you hypocrites?
19. Show me the tax money." They brought to him a denarius. ^[716]
20. He asked them, "Whose is this image and inscription?"
21. They said to him, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."
22. When they heard it, they marveled, and left him and went away.^[717]

22: 23-33 - The Question about the Resurrection

23. On that day Sadducees (those who say that there is no resurrection) came to him. They asked him,^[718]
24. saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.'
25. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother.
26. In the same way, the second also, and the third, to the seventh.
27. After them all, the woman died.

- 28. In the resurrection therefore, whose wife will she be of the seven? For they all had her.”^[719]
- 29. But Jesus answered them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.
- 30. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like God’s angels in heaven.
- 31. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read that which was spoken to you by God, saying,
- 32. ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”
- 33. When the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.^[720]

22: 34-40 - The Great Commandment

- 34. But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered themselves together.^[721]
- 35. One of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him.
- 36. “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”^[722]
- 37. Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
- 38. This is the first and great commandment.
- 39. A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.^[723]
- 40. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”^[724]

22: 41-46 - The Question about David’s Son

- 41. Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,
- 42. saying, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “Of David.”^[725]
- 43. He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,
- 44. ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’?
- 45. “If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”^[726]
- 46. No one was able to answer him a word, neither did any man dare ask him any more questions from that day forward.^[727]

23: 1-36 - Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

1. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples,^[728]
2. saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat."^[729]
3. All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don't do their works; for they say, and don't do.^[730]
4. For they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them.^[731]
5. But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes of their garments,^[732]
6. and love the place of honour at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,
7. the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi, Rabbi by men.
8. But you are not to be called 'Rabbi', for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers.
9. Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.
10. Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. ^[733]
11. But he who is greatest among you will be your servant.^[734]
12. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.^[735]
13. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees! hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.
14. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.^[736]
15. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around by sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves.^[737]
16. "Woe to you, you blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.' ^[738]
17. You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?^[739]
18. And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obligated?'
19. You blind fools! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift?^[740]
20. He therefore who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it.
21. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who has been living in it.

22. He who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits on it.^[741]
23. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone.^[742]
24. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel!^[743]
25. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and unrighteousness.
26. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the platter, that its outside may become clean also.^[744]
27. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness.
28. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.^[745]
29. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the tombs of the righteous,
30. and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we wouldn't have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'
31. Therefore you testify to yourselves that you are children of those who killed the prophets.^[746]
32. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.
33. You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the judgement of Gehenna?^[747]
34. Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,^[748]
35. that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the sanctuary and the altar.
36. Most certainly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation.^[749]

23: 37-39 - The Lament over Jerusalem

37. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I would have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not!
38. Behold, your house is left to you desolate.
39. For I tell you, you will not see me from now on, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"^[750]

24: 1-2 - Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple

1. Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way. His disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple.
2. But he answered them, "You see all of these things, don't you? Most certainly I tell you, there will not be left here one stone on another, that will not be thrown down."^[751]

24: 3-8 - Signs before the End

3. As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
4. Jesus answered them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray.
5. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray."^[752]
6. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you aren't troubled, for all this must happen, but the end is not yet.
7. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines, plagues, and earthquakes in various places.
8. But all these things are the beginning of birth pains."^[753]

24: 9-14 - The Fate of the Disciples

9. "Then they will deliver you up to oppression and will kill you. You will be hated by all of the nations for my name's sake."^[754]
10. Then many will stumble, and will deliver up one another, and will hate one another.
11. Many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray.
12. Because iniquity will be multiplied, the love of many will grow cold.
13. But he who endures to the end will be saved.
14. This Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."^[755]

24: 15-22 - The Desolating Sacrilege

15. "When, therefore, you see the desolating sacrilege, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),^[756]
16. then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
17. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house.
18. Let him who is in the field not return back to get his clothes.
19. But woe to those who are with child and to nursing mothers in those days!
20. Pray that your flight will not be in the winter nor on a Sabbath,
21. for then there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be.
22. Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened.^[757]

24: 23-28 - False Christs and False Prophets

23. "Then if any man tells you, 'Behold, here is the Christ!' or, 'There!' don't believe it.
24. For there will arise false christs, and false prophets, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones.
25. "Behold, I have told you beforehand.^[758]
26. "If therefore they tell you, 'Behold, he is in the wilderness,' don't go out; or 'Behold, he is in the inner rooms,' don't believe it.
27. For as the lightning flashes from the east, and is seen even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.
28. For wherever the carcass is, that is where the vultures gather together.^[759]

24: 29-31 - The Coming of the Son of Man

29. "But immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken:

- 30. and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.
- 31. He will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”^[760]

24: 32-36 - Time of the Coming: The Parable of Fig-Tree

- 32. “Now from the fig tree learn this parable: When its branch has now become tender and produces its leaves, you know that the summer is near.
- 33. Even so you also, when you see all these things, know that he is near, even at the doors.”^[761]
- 34. Most certainly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things are accomplished.
- 35. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”^[762]
- 36. “But no one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son,^[763] but the Father only.”^[764]

24: 37-41 - The Day of the Son of Man

- 37. As the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 38. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship,
- 39. and they didn’t know until the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”^[765]
- 40. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left.
- 41. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one will be left.”^[766]

24: 42-51 - Watchfulness and Faithfulness

- 42. Watch therefore, for you don’t know in what hour your Lord comes.”^[767]

43. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.
44. Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don't expect, the Son of Man will come.^[768]
45. "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has set over his household, to give them their food in due season?
46. Blessed is that servant whom his lord finds doing so when he comes.
47. Most certainly I tell you that he will set him over all that he has.
48. But if that evil servant should say in his heart, 'My lord is delaying his coming,
49. and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with the drunkards,
50. the lord of that servant will come in a day when he doesn't expect it and in an hour when he doesn't know it,
51. and will cut him in pieces and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. That is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be."^[769]

25: 1-13 - The Parable of the Ten Virgins

1. "Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.^[770]
2. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
3. Those who were foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them,
4. but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.^[771]
5. Now while the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
6. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!'
7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.^[772]
8. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
9. But the wise answered, saying, 'What if there isn't enough for us and you? You go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'^[773]
10. While they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.
11. Afterward the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.'
12. But he answered, 'Most certainly I tell you, I don't know you.'

13. Watch therefore, for you don't know the day nor the hour."^[774]

25: 14-30 - The Parable of the Pounds

14. "For it is like a man going into another country, who called his own servants and entrusted his goods to them. ^[775]
15. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his own ability. Then he went on his journey.
16. Immediately he who received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.
17. In the same way, he also who got the two gained another two.^[776]
18. But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the earth and hid his lord's money.
19. "Now after a long time the lord of those servants came, and settled accounts with them.
20. He who received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents. Behold, I have gained another five talents in addition to them.'
21. "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'
22. "He also who got the two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents. Behold, I have gained another two talents in addition to them.'
23. "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things. I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'^[777]
24. "He also who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you didn't sow, and gathering where you didn't scatter.
25. I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have what is yours.'
26. "But his lord answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant. You knew that I reap where I didn't sow, and gather where I didn't scatter.
27. You ought therefore to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back my own with interest.
28. Take away therefore the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.^[778]
29. For to everyone who has will be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who doesn't have, even that which he has will be taken away.

30. Throw out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"[779]

25: 31-46 - The Last Judgement

31. "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

32. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.[780]

34. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;[781]

35. for I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in.

36. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.'

37. "Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink?

38. When did we see you as a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you?

39. When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?'

40. "The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'[782]

41. Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels;

42. for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink;

43. I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

44. "Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?'

45. "Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.'

46. These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."[783]

26: 1-5 - Chief Priests and Pharisees Counsel against Jesus

1. When Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples,
2. "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."^[784]
3. Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.
4. They took counsel together that they might take Jesus by deceit and kill him.
5. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest a riot occur among the people."

26: 6-13 - The Woman with the Ointment

6. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,
7. a woman came to him having an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table.
8. But when his disciples saw this, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"
9. For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor."
10. However, knowing this, Jesus said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has done a good work for me.
11. For you always have the poor with you, but you don't always have me.
12. For in pouring this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.
13. Most certainly I tell you, wherever this gospel^[785] is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of as a memorial of her."^[786]

26: 14-16 - The Betrayal by Judas

14. Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests
15. and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you?" So they weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver.
16. From that time he sought opportunity to betray him.^[787]

26: 17-20 - Preparation for the Passover

17. Now on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
18. He said, "Go into the city to a certain person, and tell him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."'"
19. The disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and they prepared the Passover.
20. Now when evening had come, he was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples.^[788]

26: 21-25 - Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

21. As they were eating, he said, "Most certainly I tell you that one of you will betray me."
22. They were exceedingly sorrowful, and each began to ask him, "Not I,^[789] lord?"
23. He answered, "He who dipped his hand with me in the dish will betray me.
24. The Son of Man goes even as it is written of him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born."
25. Judas, who betrayed him, answered, "Not I^[790] Rabbi?" He said to him: "You said it."^[791]

26: 26-29 - The Last Supper

26. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it. He gave to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."
27. He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, "All of you drink it,
28. for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins."^[792]
29. But I tell you that I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on, until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's Kingdom."^[793]

26: 30-35 - Peter's Denial Predicted

- 30. When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
- 31. Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'
- 32. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee."^[794]
- 33. But Peter answered him, "Even if all will be made to stumble because of you, I will never be made to stumble."
- 34. Jesus said to him, "Most certainly I tell you that tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."
- 35. Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you." All of the disciples also said likewise.^[795]

26: 36-46 – Gethsemane

- 36. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go there and pray."
- 37. He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and severely troubled.
- 38. Then he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with me."
- 39. He went forward a little, fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not what I desire, but what you desire."
- 40. He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What, couldn't you watch with me for one hour?
- 41. Watch and pray, that you don't enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- 42. Again, a second time he went away and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cup can't pass away from me unless I drink it, your desire be done."
- 43. He came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.
- 44. He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time, saying the same words.
- 45. Then he came to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
- 46. Arise, let's be going. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand."^[796]

26: 47-56 - Jesus' Arrest

47. While he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people.
48. Now he who betrayed him had given them a sign, saying, "Whoever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him."
49. Immediately he came to Jesus, and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.
50. Jesus said to him, "Friend, why are you here?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.
51. Behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.
52. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all those who take the sword will die by the sword. ^[797]
53. Or do you think that I couldn't ask my Father, and he would even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?
54. How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?" ^[798]
55. In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and you didn't arrest me.
56. But all this has happened that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. ^[799]

26: 57-75 - Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Peter's Denial)

57. Those who had taken Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.
58. But Peter followed him from a distance to the court of the high priest, and entered in and sat with the officers, to see the end.
59. Now the chief priests, the elders, and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus, that they might put him to death,
60. and they found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward
61. and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.'" ^[800]
62. The high priest stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer? What is this that these testify against you?"
63. But Jesus stayed silent. The high priest answered him, "I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God." ^[801]
64. Jesus said to him, "You have said so. Nevertheless, I tell you, after this you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of

Power, and coming on the clouds of the sky."

65. Then the high priest tore his clothing, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Behold, now you have heard his blasphemy.
66. What do you think?" They answered, "He is worthy of death!"
67. Then they spat in his face and beat him with their fists, and some slapped him,
68. saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who hit you?"
69. Now Peter was sitting outside in the court, and a maid came to him, saying, "You were also with Jesus, the Galilean!"
70. But he denied it before them all, saying, "I don't know what you are talking about."
71. When he had gone out onto the porch, someone else saw him and said to those who were there, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth."
72. Again he denied it with an oath, "I don't know the man."
73. After a little while those who stood by came and said to Peter, "Surely you are also one of them, for your speech makes you known."^[802]
74. Then he began to curse and to swear, "I don't know the man!" Immediately the rooster crowed.
75. Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Then he went out and wept bitterly.^[803]

27: 1-2 - Jesus Delivered to Pilate

1. Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.
2. They bound him, led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate, the governor.^[804]

27: 3-10 - The Death of Judas

3. Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, felt remorse, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,^[805]
4. saying, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? You see to it."^[806]
5. He threw down the pieces of silver in the Temple and departed. Then he went away and hanged himself.^[807]

6. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It's not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood."^[808]
7. They took counsel, and bought the potter's field with them to bury strangers in.
8. Therefore that field has been called "The Field of Blood" to this day.^[809]
9. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him upon whom a price had been set, whom some of the children of Israel priced,
10. and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."^[810]

27: 11-14 - The Trial before Pilate

11. Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "So you say."
12. When he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.
13. Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many things they testify against you?"
14. He gave him no answer, not even one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly.^[811]

27: 15-23 - Jesus or Barabbas

15. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the multitude one prisoner whom they desired.^[812]
16. They had then a notable prisoner called Jesus Barabbas.^[813]
17. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Jesus the Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?"^[814]
18. For he knew that because of envy they had delivered him up.
19. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him."^[815]
20. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.
21. But the governor answered them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"
22. Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do to Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let him be crucified!"

23. But the governor said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they cried out exceedingly, saying, "Let him be crucified!"^[816]

27: 24-26 - Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

24. So when Pilate saw that nothing was being gained, but rather that a disturbance was starting, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. You see to it."^[817]

25. All the people answered, "May his blood be on us and on our children!"^[818]

26. Then he released Barabbas to them, but Jesus he flogged and delivered to be crucified.^[819]

27: 27-31 - Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers

27. Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered the whole garrison together against him.

28. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him.

29. They braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

30. They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.

31. When they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, and put his clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.^[820]

27: 32-38 - The Crucifixion

32. As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, and they compelled him to go with them, that he might carry his cross.^[821]

33. When they came to a place called "Golgotha", that is to say, "The place of a skull,"

34. they gave him sour wine to drink mixed with gall. When he had tasted it, he would not drink. ^[822]

35. When they had crucified him, they divided his clothing among them, casting lots,
36. and they sat and watched him there.

37. They set up over his head the accusation against him written, "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

38. Then there were two robbers crucified with him, one on his right hand and one on the left.^[823]

27: 39-43 - Jesus Derided on the Cross

39. Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads

40. and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

41. Likewise the chief priests also mocking with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders, said,

42. "He saved others, but he can't save himself. If he is the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him.

43. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now, if he wants him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"^[824]

27: 44-54 - The 'Death' of Jesus

44. The robbers also who were crucified with him cast on him the same reproach.^[825]

45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ^[826]

46. About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?" That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ^[827]

47. Some of them who stood there, when they heard it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ^[828]

48. Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him a drink.

49. The rest said, "Let him be. Let's see whether Elijah comes to save him."^[829]

50. Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.^[830]

51. Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split.^[831]

52. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

53. and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many.^[832]

54. Now the centurion and those who were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were done, were terrified, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"^[833]

27: 55-61 - The Burial of Jesus

55. Many women were there watching from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, serving him.
56. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.^[834]
57. When evening had come, a rich man from Arimathaea named Joseph, who himself was also Jesus' disciple, came.
58. This man went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given up.
59. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth
60. and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut out in the rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.
61. Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.^[835]

27: 62-66 - The Guard at the Tomb

62. Now on the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together to Pilate,^[836]
63. saying: "Lord,^[837] we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise again.'
64. Command therefore that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come at night and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead;' and the last deception will be worse than the first."^[838]
65. Pilate said to them, "Have a guard! ^[839] Go, make it as secure as you can."
66. So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone.

28: 1-8 - The Women at the Tomb

1. Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.^[840]
2. Behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from the sky and came and rolled away the stone from the door and sat on it.
3. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

4. For fear of him, the guards shook, and became like dead men.^[841]
5. The angel answered the women, "Don't be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who has been crucified.
6. He is not here, for he has risen, just like he said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying.
7. Go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead, and behold, he goes before you into Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you."^[842]
8. They departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.^[843]

28: 9-10 - Jesus Appears to the Women

9. As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" They came and took hold of his feet, and paid homage^[844] to him.
10. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go tell my brothers that they should go into Galilee, and there they will see me."^[845]

28: 11-15 - The Report of the Guard

11. Now while they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city and told the chief priests all the things that had happened.^[846]
12. When they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave a large amount of silver to the soldiers,
13. saying, "Say that his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.
14. If this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and make you free of worry."
15. So they took the money and did as they were told. This saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continues until today.^[847]

28: 16-20 - Jesus Appears to the Eleven in Galilee

16. But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had sent them.^[848]

17. When they saw him, they bowed down^[849] to him, but some doubted. ^[850]
18. Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ^[851]
19. Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ^[852]
20. teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." ^[853]

The Gospel According to Luke

1: 1-4 – Prologue

1. Since many have undertaken to set in order a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us,^[854]
2. even as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants^[855] of the word delivered them to us,
3. it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus;^[856]
4. that you might know the certainty concerning the things in which you were instructed.

1: 5-25 - The Promise of the Birth of John the Baptist

5. There was in the days of Herod,^[857] King of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah^[858] of the priestly division of Abijah.^[859] He had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.^[860]
6. They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. ^[861]
7. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well advanced in years.^[862]
8. Now while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his division
9. according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.^[863]
10. The whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.
11. An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ^[864]
12. Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.
13. But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zacharias, because your request has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."^[865]
14. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.
15. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he *definitely* will drink no wine nor strong drink^[866], and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit^[867] even from his mother's womb.
16. He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

17. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to prepare a people prepared for the Lord."
18. Zacharias said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."
19. The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.
20. Behold, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day that these things will happen, because you didn't believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."^[868]
21. The people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled that he delayed in the temple.
22. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple. He continued making signs to them, and remained mute.^[869]
23. When the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his house.
24. After these days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and she hid herself five months, saying,
25. "Thus has the Lord done to me in the days in which he looked at me, to take away my reproach among men."^[870]

1: 26-38 - The Annunciation

26. Now in the sixth month^[871] the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee^[872] named Nazareth,^[873]
27. to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary.^[874]
28. And when he came to her he said: "Greetings! Blessed one, the Lord *is* with you!"^[875]
29. But she was greatly troubled at the saying,^[876] and considered what kind of salutation this might be.^[877]
30. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.
31. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and shall name him 'Jesus.'^[878]
32. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.^[879] The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,^[880]
33. and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom."^[881]
34. Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?"
35. The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God.
36. Behold, Elizabeth your relative also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called

barren.

37. For nothing spoken by God is impossible.”

38. Mary said, “Behold, / *am* the slave^[882] of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word. Then the angel departed from her.”^[883]

1: 39-56 - Mary’s Visit to Elizabeth

39. Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah,

40. and entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.^[884]

41. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.^[885]

42. She called out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43. Why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”^[886]

44. For behold, when the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy!

45. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!”^[887]

46. Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord.”^[888]

47. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour,

48. for he has looked at the humble state of his servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will consider^[889] me blessed.

49. For he who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name.

50. His mercy is for generations and generations on those who fear him.^[890]

51. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52. He has put down princes from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly.

53. He has filled the hungry with good things. He has sent the rich away empty.

54. He aided His child^[891] Israel, that he might remember mercy,

55. as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.”^[892]

56. Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her house.^[893]

1: 57-80 - The Birth of John the Baptist

57. Now the time that Elizabeth should give birth was fulfilled, and she gave birth to a son.
58. Her neighbours and her relatives heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.
59. On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child; and they were calling him Zacharias, after the name of his father.^[894]
60. His mother answered, "Not so; but he will be called John."^[895]
61. They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name."^[896]
62. They made signs to his father, what he would have him called.^[897]
63. He asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." They all marvelled.
64. His mouth was opened immediately and his tongue freed, and he spoke, blessing God.
65. Fear came on all who lived around them, and all these sayings were talked about throughout all the hill country of Judea.
66. All who heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, "What then will this child be?" The hand of the Lord was with him.
67. His father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,
68. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has relieved^[898] and redeemed his people;^[899]
69. and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David^[900]
70. (as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets who have been from of old),
71. salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;^[901]
72. to show mercy toward our fathers, to remember his holy covenant,
73. the oath which he swore to Abraham our father,^[902]
74. to grant to us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear,
75. in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.
76. And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways,^[903]
77. to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins,
78. because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the dawn from on high will visit us,
79. to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."
80. The child was growing and becoming strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his public appearance to Israel.^[904]

2: 1-7 - The Birth of Jesus

1. Now in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus^[905] that all the world should be enrolled.^[906]
2. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinus^[907] was governor of Syria.^[908]
3. All went to enrol themselves, everyone to his own city.
4. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David;
5. to enrol himself with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him as wife, being pregnant.
6. While they were there, the day had come for her to give birth.
7. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.^[909]

2: 8-20 - The Adoration of the Infant Jesus

8. There were shepherds in the same country camping^[910] and keeping watch by night over their flock.^[911]
9. Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
10. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people.
11. For there is born to you today, in David's city, a saviour^[912] who is lord Christ^[913].
12. This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding trough."
13. Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying,
14. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."
15. When the angels went away from them into the sky, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem, now, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."
16. They came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding trough.
17. When they saw it, they publicised widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child.
18. All who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds.^[914]
19. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.
20. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.^[915]

2: 21-38 - The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple

21. When eight days were fulfilled for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.^[916]
22. When the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord^[917]
23. (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")^[918]
24. and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."^[919]
25. Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.^[920]
26. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
27. He came in the Spirit into the temple. When the parents brought in the child, Jesus, that they might do concerning him according to the custom of the law,^[921]
28. then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,
29. "Now you are releasing your servant, Master, according to your word, in peace;
30. for my eyes have seen your salvation,
31. which you have prepared before the face of all peoples;
32. a light for revelation to the nations,^[922] and glory of your people Israel."^[923]
33. Joseph and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him,^[924]
34. and Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against.
35. Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."
36. There was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity,
37. and she had been a widow for about eighty-four years), who didn't depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and petitions night and day.
38. Coming up at that very hour, she gave thanks to God,^[925] and spoke of him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem.^[926]

1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,^[935] Pontius Pilate^[936] being governor of Judea, and Herod^[937] being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,
2. In the high priesthood of Annas^[938] and Caiaphas,^[939] the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.
3. He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins.
4. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.
5. Every valley will be filled. Every mountain and hill will be brought low. The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth.
6. All flesh will see God's salvation.'"^[940]

3: 7-9 - John's Preaching of Repentance

7. He said therefore to the multitudes who went out to be baptised by him, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8. Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance, and don't begin to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father;' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones!
9. Even now the axe also lies at the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire."^[941]

3: 10-14 - John Replies to Questioners

10. The multitudes asked him, "What then must we do?"
11. He answered them, "He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise."^[942]
12. Tax-collectors^[943] also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?"
13. He said to them, "Collect no more than that which is appointed to you."
14. Soldiers^[944] also asked him, saying, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages."^[945]

3: 15-18 - John's Messianic Preaching

15. As the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ,^[946]
16. John answered them all, "I indeed baptise you with water, but he comes who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen. He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire,
17. whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."^[947]
18. Then with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people,

3: 19-20 - The Death of John the Baptist

19. but Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done,
20. added this also to them all, that he shut up John in prison.^[948]

3: 21-22 - The Baptism of Jesus

21. Now when all the people were baptised, Jesus also had been baptised, and was praying. The sky was opened,
22. and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form like a dove on him; and a voice came out of the sky, saying "You are my beloved Son. In you I am well pleased."^[949]

3: 23-38 - The Genealogy of Jesus

23. Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years old, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,^[950]

24. the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,
25. the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai,
26. the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah,
27. the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,
28. the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er,
29. the son of Jose, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi,
30. the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim,
31. the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,
32. the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,
33. the son of Amminadab, the son of Aram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,
34. the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,
35. the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah,
36. the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,
37. the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,
38. the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. ^[951]

4: 1-13 - The Temptation

1. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness^[952]
2. for forty days, being tempted by the devil. He ate nothing in those days. Afterward, when they were completed, he was hungry.
3. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."
4. Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ^[953]
5. The devil, leading him up on a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
6. The devil said to him, "I will give you all this authority, and their glory, for it has been delivered to me; and I give it to whomever I want.
7. If you therefore will worship before me, it will all be yours."
8. And Jesus replied saying to him: "It is written; The Lord your God you shall revere and Him alone you shall worship." ^[954]
9. He led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, cast yourself

down from here,

10. for it is written, 'He will put his angels in charge of you, to guard you;'
11. and, 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone.'"
12. Jesus answering, said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"
13. When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him until another time.^[955]

4: 14-15 - Ministry in Galilee

14. And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the spirit, and a rumour went out to the whole region concerning him.
15. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.^[956]

4: 16-30 - Jesus' Preaching in Nazareth

16. He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.^[957]
17. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,
18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ^[958]
19. and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."^[959]
20. He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.
21. He began to tell them, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."
22. All testified about him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and they said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"^[960]
23. He said to them, "Doubtless you will tell me this parable, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in your hometown.'"
24. He said, "Most certainly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown."^[961]
25. But truly I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up three years and six

months, when a great famine came over all the land.

- 26. Elijah was sent to none of them, except to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.
- 27. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed, except Naaman, the Syrian."
- 28. They were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things.
- 29. They rose up, threw him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that their city was built on, that they might throw him off the cliff.
- 30. But he, passing through the middle of them, went his way.^[962]

4: 31-32 - Teaching in the Synagogue at Capernaum

- 31. He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. He was teaching them on the Sabbath day, ^[963]
- 32. and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority.^[964]

4: 33-37 - The Healing of the Demonic in the Synagogue

- 33. In the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,^[965]
- 34. saying, "Ah! what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God!"
- 35. Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down in the middle of them, he came out of him, having done him no harm.
- 36. Amazement came on all, and they spoke together, one with another, saying, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!"
- 37. News about him went out into every place of the surrounding region.

4: 38-39 - The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law

- 38. He rose up from the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted with a great fever, and they begged him for her.
- 39. He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her. Immediately she rose up and served them.^[966]

4: 40-41 - The Sick Healed at Evening

- 40. When the sun was setting, all those who had any sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.
- 41. Demons also came out of many, crying out, and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Rebuking them, he didn't allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.^[967]

4: 42-44 - Jesus Departs from Capernaum

- 42. When it was day, he departed and went into an uninhabited place, and the multitudes looked for him, and came to him, and held on to him, so that he wouldn't go away from them.
- 43. But he said to them, "I must preach the good news of God's Kingdom to the other cities also. For this reason I have been sent."^[968]
- 44. He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

5: 1-11 - The Call of the Disciples

- 1. Now while the multitude pressed on him and heard the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.^[969]
- 2. He saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets.
- 3. He entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.^[970]
- 4. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch."
- 5. Simon answered him, "Master, we worked all night, and took nothing; but at your word I will let down the net."

6. When they had done this, they caught a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking.
7. They beckoned to their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. They came, and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.^[971]
8. But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord."^[972]
9. For he was amazed, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had caught;
10. and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will be catching people alive."
11. When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything, and followed him.^[973]

5: 12-16 - The Cleansing of the Leper

12. While he was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man full of leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and begged him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."^[974]
13. He stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I want to. Be made clean." Immediately the leprosy left him.
14. He commanded him to tell no one, "But go your way, and show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
15. But the report concerning him spread much more, and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.
16. But he withdrew himself into the desert, and prayed.

5: 17:26 - The Healing of the Paralytic

17. On one of those days, he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law^[975] sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was with him to heal them.
18. Behold, men brought a paralysed man on a cot, and they sought to bring him in to lay before Jesus.
19. Not finding a way to bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his cot into the middle before Jesus.^[976]

20. Seeing their faith, he said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."
21. The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"
22. But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, answered them, "Why are you reasoning so in your hearts?"
23. Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you;' or to say, 'Arise and walk?'
24. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (he said to the paralysed man), "I tell you, arise, take up your cot, and go to your house."
25. Immediately he rose up before them, and took up that which he was laying on, and departed to his house, glorifying God.
26. Amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God. They were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

5: 27-32 - The Call of Levi (Matthew)

27. After these things he went out, and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and said to him, "Follow me!"^[977]
28. He left everything, and rose up and followed him.
29. Levi made a great feast for him in his house. There was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them.
30. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"
31. Jesus answered them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do.
32. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

5: 33-39 - The Question about Fasting

33. They said to him, "Why do John's disciples often fast and pray, likewise also the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink?"^[978]
34. He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?"
35. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them. Then they will fast in those days."

36. He also told a parable to them. "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old garment, or else he will tear the new, and also the piece from the new will not match the old.
37. No one puts new wine into old wine skins, or else the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.
38. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ^[979]
39. No man having drunk old wine immediately desires new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"^[980]

6: 1-5 - Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

1. Now on the second Sabbath after the first, he was going through the grain fields. His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate, rubbing them in their hands.^[981]
2. But some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why do you do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?"
3. Jesus, answering them, said, "Haven't you read what David did when he was hungry, he, and those who were with him;
4. how he entered into God's house, and took and ate the show bread, and gave also to those who were with him, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests alone?"
5. He said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."^[982]

6: 6-11 - The Man with the Withered Hand

6. It also happened on another Sabbath that he entered into the synagogue and taught. There was a man there, and his right hand was withered.
7. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against him.
8. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Rise up, and stand in the middle." He arose and stood.
9. Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you something: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm? To save a life, or to kill?"
10. He looked around at them all, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did, and his hand was restored as sound as

the other.

11. But they were filled with rage, and talked with one another about what they might do to Jesus.^[983]

6: 12-16 - The Choosing of the Twelve

12. In these days, he went out to the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God.^[984]
13. When it was day, he called his disciples, and from them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles:
14. Simon, whom he also named Peter; Andrew, his brother; James; John; Philip; Bartholomew;
15. Matthew; Thomas; James, the son of Alphaeus; Simon, who was called the Zealot;
16. Judas the son of James; and Judas Iscariot, who also became a traitor.^[985]

6: 17-19 - Jesus Heals Multitudes by the Sea

17. He came down with them, and stood on a level place, with a crowd of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases;
18. as well as those who were troubled by unclean spirits, and they were being healed.
19. All the multitude sought to touch him, for power came out of him and healed them all.^[986]

6: 20-26 - The Beatitudes

20. He lifted up his eyes to his disciples, and said, "Blessed are you who are poor, God's Kingdom is yours.^[987]
21. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.^[988]
22. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude and mock you, and throw out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.
23. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets.^[989]

- 24. "But woe to you who are rich! For you have received your consolation.
- 25. Woe to you, you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
- 26. Woe, when men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets.

6: 27-36 - Love of One's Enemies/Golden Rule/Retaliation

- 27. "But I tell you who hear: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
- 28. bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.
- 29. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from him who takes away your cloak, don't withhold your coat also.
- 30. Give to everyone who asks you, and don't ask him who takes away your goods to give them back again.^[990]
- 31. "As you would like people to do to you, do exactly so to them."^[991]
- 32. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
- 33. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.
- 34. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much.
- 35. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.
- 36. Therefore be merciful, even as your Father is also merciful."^[992]

6: 37-42 - On Judging

- 37. Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Set free, and you will be set free.
- 38. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given to you. For with the same measure you measure it will be measured back to you."^[993]
- 39. He spoke a parable to them. "Can the blind guide the blind? Won't they both fall into a pit?
- 40. A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher."^[994]

41. Why do you see the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye?
42. Or how can you tell your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck of chaff that is in your eye,' when you yourself don't see the beam that is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye.^[995]

6: 43-45 - "By their Fruits..."

43. "For there is no good tree that produces rotten fruit; nor again a rotten tree that produces good fruit.
44. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don't gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.
45. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks."^[996]

6: 46-49 - The House Built upon the Rock

46. "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say?
47. Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, I will show you who he is like.
48. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it was founded on the rock.
49. But he who hears, and doesn't do, is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."^[997]

7: 1-10 - The Centurion of Capernaum

1. After he had finished speaking in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capernaum.
2. A certain centurion's slave,^[998] who was dear to him, was sick and at the point of death.

3. When he heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and save his slave.^[999]
4. When they came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to do this for him,
5. for he loves our nation, and he built our synagogue for us."^[1000]
6. Jesus went with them. When he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof.
7. Therefore I didn't even think myself worthy to come to you; but say the word, and my slave will be healed.
8. For I also am a man placed under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."
9. And when Jesus heard this he marveled at him, and turned to the crowds following him and spoke: "I say to you, not even in Israel found I so much faith."
10. And when those sent returned to the house, they found the slave being of good health.^[1001]

7: 11-17 - The Widow's Son at Nain

11. Soon afterwards, he went to a city called Nain. Many of his disciples, along with a great multitude, went with him.
12. Now when he came near to the gate of the city, behold, one who was dead was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Many people of the city were with her.
13. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, "Don't cry."
14. He came near and touched the coffin, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!"^[1002]
15. He who was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother.
16. Fear took hold of all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has relieved^[1003] his people."^[1004]
17. This report went out concerning him in the whole of Judea, and in all the surrounding region.

7: 18-23 - John the Baptist's Question and Jesus' Answer

18. And the disciples of John announced to him all these things.

19. And when John called two of his disciples, he sent them to the lord saying: "Are you the one coming or shall we wait for another?"^[1005]
20. And when the men approached him, they spoke: "John the Baptist sent us to you saying: 'Are you the one coming or shall we wait for another?'"
21. In that hour he cured many of the sicknesses and diseases and evil spirits, and many blind *were* granted to see.
22. And he replied and spoke to them: "Go and announce to John what you see and hear, the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news announced to them.
23. And blessed is he who may never stumble because of me."^[1006]

7: 24-35 - Jesus' Witness Concerning John

24. When John's messengers had departed, he began to tell the multitudes about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?
25. But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously dressed, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.
26. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet.
27. This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'^[1007]
28. "For I tell you, among those who are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptizer, yet he who is least in God's Kingdom is greater than he."
29. When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they declared God to be just, having been baptised with John's baptism.
30. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God, not being baptised by him themselves.
31. "To what then should I compare the people of this generation? What are they like?
32. They are like children who sit in the marketplace, and call to one another, saying, 'We piped to you, and you didn't dance. We mourned, and you didn't weep.'
33. For John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'
34. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard; a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

35. Wisdom is justified by all her children."^[1008]

7: 36-50 - The Woman with the Ointment

36. One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table.^[1009]

37. Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that he was reclining in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment.

38. Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ^[1010]

39. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what kind of woman this is who touches him, that she is a sinner."^[1011]

40. Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." He said, "Teacher, say on."

41. "A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

42. When they couldn't pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?"

43. Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

44. Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

45. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet.

46. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

47. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

48. He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49. Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50. He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."^[1012]

8: 1-3 - The Ministering Women

1. Soon afterwards, he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of God's Kingdom. With him were the twelve,
2. and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene,^[1013] from whom seven demons had gone out.
3. and Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others; who served them from their possessions.^[1014]

8: 4-8 - The Parable of the Sower

4. When a great multitude came together, and people from every city were coming to him, he spoke by a parable.
5. "The farmer went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some fell along the road, and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the sky devoured it.
6. Other seed fell on the rock, and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture.
7. Other fell amid the thorns, and the thorns grew with it, and choked it.
8. Other fell into the good ground, and grew, and produced one hundred times as much fruit." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"^[1015]

8: 9-10 - The Reason for Speaking in Parables

9. Then his disciples asked him, "What does this parable mean?"
10. He said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of God's Kingdom, but to the rest in parables; that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"^[1016]

8: 11-15 - Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower

11. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.
12. Those along the road are those who hear, then the devil comes, and takes away the word from their heart, that they may not

believe and be saved.

13. Those on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; but these have no root, who believe for a while, then fall away in time of temptation.
14. That which fell among the thorns, these are those who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.
15. Those in the good ground, these are those who with an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it tightly, and produce fruit with perseverance.”^[1017]

8: 16-18 - The Parable of the Pounds

16. “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a container, or puts it under a bed; but puts it on a stand, that those who enter in may see the light.
17. For nothing is hidden that will not be revealed; nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light.
18. Be careful therefore how you hear. For whoever has, to him will be given; and whoever doesn’t have, from him will be taken away even that which he thinks he has.”

8: 19-21 - Jesus’ True Kindred

19. His mother and brothers came to him, and they could not come near him for the crowd.
20. Some people told him, “Your mother and your brothers stand outside, desiring to see you.”
21. But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God, and do it.”^[1018]

8: 22-25 - Stilling the Storm

22. Now on one of those days, he entered into a boat, himself and his disciples, and he said to them, “Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.” So they launched out.

- 23. But as they sailed, he fell asleep. A wind storm came down on the lake, and they were taking on dangerous amounts of water.
- 24. They came to him, and awoke him, saying, "Master, master, we are dying!" He awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they ceased, and it was calm.
- 25. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" Being afraid they marvelled, saying to one another, "Who is this then, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"^[1019]

8: 26-39 - The Gadarene Demonics

- 26. Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.
- 27. When Jesus stepped ashore, a certain man out of the city who had demons for a long time met him. He wore no clothes, and didn't live in a house, but in the tombs.
- 28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, "What do I have to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torment me!"
- 29. For Jesus was commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For the unclean spirit had often seized the man. He was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters. Breaking the bonds apart, he was driven by the demon into the desert.
- 30. Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion," for many demons had entered into him.
- 31. They begged him that he would not command them to go into the abyss.
- 32. Now there was there a herd of many pigs feeding on the mountain, and they begged him that he would allow them to enter into those. Then he allowed them.
- 33. The demons came out of the man, and entered into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.
- 34. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.
- 35. People went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.
- 36. Those who saw it told them how he who had been possessed by demons was healed.
- 37. All the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were very much afraid. Then he entered into the boat and returned.
- 38. But the man from whom the demons had gone out begged him that he might go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39. "Return to your house, and declare what great things God has done for you." He went his way, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.^[1020]

8: 40-56 - Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with Haemorrhage

40. When Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.
41. Behold, a man named Jairus came. He was a ruler of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus' feet, and begged him to come into his house,
42. for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as he went, the multitudes pressed against him.
43. And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by any one,^[1021]
44. came behind him, and touched the fringe of his cloak. Immediately the flow of her blood stopped.
45. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!"
46. But Jesus said, "Someone did touch me, for I perceived that power has gone out of me."
47. When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.
48. He said to her, "Daughter, cheer up. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace."
49. While he still spoke, one from the ruler of the synagogue's house came, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Don't trouble the Teacher."
50. But Jesus hearing it, answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be healed."
51. When he came to the house, he didn't allow anyone to enter in, except Peter, John, James, the father of the child, and her mother.
52. All were weeping and mourning her, but he said, "Don't weep. She isn't dead, but sleeping."
53. They were ridiculing him, knowing that she was dead.
54. But he put them all outside, and taking her by the hand, he called, saying, "Child, arise!"
55. Her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately. He commanded that something be given to her to eat.
56. Her parents were amazed, but he commanded them to tell no one what had been done.^[1022]

9: 1-6 - Commissioning the Twelve

1. He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.
2. He sent them out to preach God's Kingdom and to heal the sick.
3. He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey—no staffs, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money. Don't have two coats each.
4. Into whatever house you enter, stay there, and depart from there.
5. As many as don't receive you, when you depart from that city, shake off even the dust from your feet for a testimony against them."
6. They departed and went throughout the villages, preaching the Good News and healing everywhere.^[1023]

9: 7-9 - Opinions Regarding Jesus

7. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him; and he was very perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead,
8. and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.
9. Herod said, "I beheaded John, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" He sought to see him.^[1024]

9: 10-17 - Five Thousand Are Fed

10. The apostles, when they had returned, told him what things they had done. He took them and withdrew apart to a desert region of a city called Bethsaida.
11. But the multitudes, perceiving it, followed him. He welcomed them, spoke to them of God's Kingdom, and he cured those who needed healing.
12. The day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and farms, and lodge, and get food, for we are here in a deserted place."
13. But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we should go and buy food for all these people."

14. For they were about five thousand men. He said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each."
15. They did so, and made them all sit down.
16. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to the sky, he blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.
17. They ate and were all filled. They gathered up twelve baskets of broken pieces that were left over.^[1025]

9: 18-21 - Peter's Confession

18. As he was praying alone, the disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?"^[1026]
19. They answered, "'John the Baptizer,' but others say, 'Elijah,' and others, that one of the old prophets has risen again."
20. He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."
21. But he warned them, and commanded them to tell this to no one,^[1027]

9: 22 - Jesus Foretells His Passion

22. saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."^[1028]

9: 23-27 - "If Any Man Would Come after Me..."

23. He said to all, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.
24. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever will lose his life for my sake, will save it.
25. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits his own self?
26. For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in his glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.
27. But I tell you the truth: There are some of those who stand here who will in no way taste of death until they see God's

9: 28-36 - The Transfiguration

- 28. About eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter, John, and James, and went up onto the mountain to pray.^[1030]
- 29. As he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became white and dazzling.
- 30. Behold, two men were talking with him, who were Moses and Elijah,
- 31. who appeared in glory, and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.^[1031]
- 32. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him.^[1032]
- 33. As they were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let's make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah," not knowing what he said.
- 34. While he said these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud.
- 35. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"
- 36. When the voice came, Jesus was found alone. They were silent, and told no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.^[1033]

9: 37-42 - Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by a Spirit

- 37. On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him.^[1034]
- 38. Behold, a man from the crowd called out, saying, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.
- 39. Behold, a spirit takes him, he suddenly cries out, and it convulses him so that he foams, and it hardly departs from him, bruising him severely.
- 40. I begged your disciples to cast it out, and they couldn't."
- 41. Jesus answered, "Faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here."
- 42. While he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him violently. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.^[1035]

9: 43-45 - Jesus Foretells His Passion Again

- 43. They were all astonished at the majesty of God. But while all were marvelling at all the things which Jesus did, he said to his disciples,
- 44. "Let these words sink into your ears, for the Son of Man will be delivered up into the hands of men."
- 45. But they didn't understand this saying. It was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.^[1036]

9: 46-48 - True Greatness

- 46. An argument arose among them about which of them was the greatest.
- 47. Jesus, perceiving the reasoning of their hearts, took a little child, and set him by his side,
- 48. and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in my name receives me. Whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For whoever is least among you all, this one will be great."^[1037]

9: 49-50 - The Strange Exorcist

- 49. John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he doesn't follow with us."
- 50. Jesus said to him, "Don't forbid him, for he who is not against us is for us."^[1038]

9: 51-56 - Jesus Rejected by Samaritans

- 51. It came to pass, when the days were near that he should be taken up, he intently set his face to go to Jerusalem
- 52. and sent messengers before his face. They went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, so as to prepare for him.
- 53. They didn't receive him, because he was travelling with his face set toward Jerusalem.

- 54. When his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from the sky and destroy them, just as Elijah did?"
- 55. But he turned and rebuked them. ^[1039]
- 56. And they travelled into another village. ^[1040]

9: 57-62 - On Following Jesus

- 57. As they went on the way, a certain man said to him, "I want to follow you wherever you go, Lord."
- 58. Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
- 59. He said to another, "Follow me!" But he said, "Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father."
- 60. But Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and announce God's Kingdom."
- 61. Another also said, "I want to follow you, Lord, but first allow me to say good-bye to those who are at my house."
- 62. But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for God's Kingdom." ^[1041]

10: 1-12 - Commissioning the Seventy

- 1. Now after these things, the Lord also appointed seventy others, and sent them two by two ahead of him into every city and place where he was about to come. ^[1042]
- 2. Then he said to them, "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the labourers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he may send out labourers into his harvest."
- 3. Go your ways. Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.
- 4. Carry no purse, nor wallet, nor sandals. Greet no one on the way.
- 5. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' ^[1043]
- 6. If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you.
- 7. Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the labourer is worthy of his wages. Don't go from house to house.
- 8. Into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you.

9. Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, 'God's Kingdom has come near to you.'
10. But into whatever city you enter, and they don't receive you, go out into its streets and say,
11. 'Even the dust from your city that clings to us, we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that God's Kingdom has come near to you.'
12. I tell you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.^[1044]

10: 13-15 - Woes Pronounced on Galilean Cities

13. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.
14. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgement than for you.
15. You, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.^[1045]

10: 16-20 - The Return of the Seventy

16. Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me. Whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."
17. The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"^[1046]
18. He said to them, "I saw Satan having fallen like lightning from heaven.
19. Behold, I give you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will in any way hurt you.
20. Nevertheless, don't rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."^[1047]

10: 21-24 - Jesus' Thanksgiving, Blessedness of Disciples

21. In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for so it was well-

pleasing in your sight."

- 22. Turning to the disciples, he said, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is, except the Father, and who the Father is, except the Son, and he to whomever the Son desires to reveal him."
- 23. Turning to the disciples, he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see,
- 24. for I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which you see, and didn't see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and didn't hear them."^[1048]

10: 25-28 - The Great Commandment

- 25. Behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"^[1049]
- 26. He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"
- 27. He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself."
- 28. He said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live."^[1050]

10: 29-37 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan

- 29. But he, desiring to justify himself, asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?"^[1051]
- 30. Jesus answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.
- 31. By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
- 32. In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.
- 33. But a certain Samaritan, as he travelled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion,
- 34. came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
- 35. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.'

36. Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?"
37. He said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."^[1052]

10: 38-42 - Mary and Martha

38. As they went on their way, he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.
39. She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.
40. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she came up to him, and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister left me to serve alone? Ask her therefore to help me."
41. Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,
42. but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."^[1053]

11: 1-4 - The Lord's Prayer

1. When he finished praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."^[1054]
2. "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
3. Give us each day our daily bread;
4. and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation."^[1055]

11: 5-8 - The Persistent Friend at Midnight

5. He said to them, "Which of you, if you go to a friend at midnight, and tell him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,
6. for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him,
7. and he from within will answer and say, 'Don't bother me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give it to you'?

8. I tell you, although he will not rise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, he will get up and give him as many as he needs."^[1056]

11: 9-13 - God's Answering of Prayer

9. "I tell you, keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you.
10. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.
11. And which father out of you, *when* the son will ask for fish, instead of a fish, will give him a snake? ^[1057]
12. Or if he asks for an egg, he won't give him a scorpion, will he?
13. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"^[1058]

11: 14-23 - On Collusion with Satan

14. He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the multitudes marvelled.
15. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons." ^[1059]
16. Others, testing him, sought from him a sign from heaven.^[1060]
17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. A house divided against itself falls.
18. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.
19. But if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.
20. But if I by God's finger cast out demons, then God's Kingdom has come to you.
21. "When the strong man, fully armed, guards his own dwelling, his goods are safe.
22. But when someone stronger attacks him and overcomes him, he takes from him his whole armour in which he trusted, and divides his plunder.
23. "He that is not with me is against me. He who doesn't gather with me scatters."^[1061]

11: 24-26 - The Return of the Evil Spirit

- 24. The unclean spirit, when he has gone out of the man, passes through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none, he says, 'I will turn back to my house from which I came out.'
- 25. When he returns, he finds it swept and put in order.
- 26. Then he goes, and takes seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. The last state of that man becomes worse than the first."^[1062]

11: 27-28 - True Blessedness

- 27. It came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which nursed you!"
- 28. But he said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it."^[1063]

11: 29-32 - The Sign of Jonah

- 29. When the multitudes were gathering together to him, he began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks after a sign. No sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah, the prophet.
- 30. For even as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so the Son of Man will also be to this generation.
- 31. The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgement with the men of this generation, and will condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, one greater than Solomon is here.
- 32. The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgement with this generation, and will condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, one greater than Jonah is here."^[1064]

11: 34-36 - The Sound Eye

- 33. "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, that those who come in may see the light.
- 34. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore when your eye is good, your whole body is also full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is full of darkness.
- 35. Therefore see whether the light that is in you isn't darkness.
- 36. If therefore your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining gives you light."^[1065]

11: 37-54 - Defilement – Traditional and Real

- 37. Now as he spoke, a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him. He went in and sat at the table.
- 38. When the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed himself before dinner^[1066]
- 39. The Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness.
- 40. You foolish ones, didn't he who made the outside make the inside also?
- 41. But give for gifts to the needy those things which are within, and behold, all things will be clean to you."^[1067]
- 42. But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, but you bypass justice and God's love."^[1068] You ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone.
- 43. For you love the best seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces.
- 44. Woe to you! For you are like hidden graves, and the men who walk over them don't know it."^[1069]
- 45. One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you insult us also."
- 46. He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load men with burdens that are difficult to carry, and you yourselves won't even lift one finger to help carry those burdens.
- 47. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.
- 48. So you testify and consent to the works of your fathers. For they killed them, and you build their tombs.
- 49. Therefore also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles; and some of them they will kill and persecute,
- 50. that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51. from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.' Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.
52. Woe to you lawyers! For you took away the key of knowledge. You didn't enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in, you hindered."^[1070]
53. As he said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be terribly angry, and to draw many things out of him;
54. lying in wait for him, to catch at something he might say.^[1071]

12: 1 - The Leaven of the Pharisees

1. Meanwhile, when a multitude of many thousands had gathered together, so much so that they trampled on each other, he began to tell his disciples first of all, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."^[1072]

12: 2-9 - Exhortation to Fearless Confession

2. "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.
3. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light. What you have spoken in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.
4. "I tell you, my friends, don't be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.
5. But I will warn you whom you should fear. Fear Him who after He has killed, has power to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him.
6. "Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Not one of them is forgotten by God.
7. But the very hairs of your head are all counted. Therefore don't be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows.
8. "I tell you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will also confess before the angels of God;
9. but he who denies me in the presence of men will be denied in the presence of God's angels."^[1073]

12: 10-12 - Sin against the Holy Spirit & Fate of the Disciples

10. Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.^[1074]
11. When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, don't be anxious how or what you will answer, or what you will say;
12. for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour what you must say."^[1075]

12: 13-15 - Warning against Avarice

13. One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."
14. But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"
15. He said to them, "Beware! Keep yourselves from covetousness, for a man's life doesn't consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses."^[1076]

12: 16-21 - The Parable of the Rich Fool

16. He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man produced abundantly.^[1077]
17. He reasoned within himself, saying, 'What will I do, because I don't have room to store my crops?'
18. He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.
19. I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry."'
20. "But God said to him, 'You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared—whose will they be?'
21. So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."^[1078]

12: 22-32 - On Anxiety

22. He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor yet for your body, what you

will wear.^[1079]

- 23. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.
- 24. Consider the ravens: they don't sow, they don't reap, they have no warehouse or barn, and God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds! ^[1080]
- 25. And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life? ^[1081]
- 26. If then you aren't able to do even the least things, why are you anxious about the rest?
- 27. Consider the lilies, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 28. But if this is how God clothes the grass in the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith?
- 29. Don't seek what you will eat or what you will drink; neither be anxious.
- 30. For the nations^[1082] of the world seek after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need these things.
- 31. But seek God's Kingdom, and all these things will be added to you.
- 32. Don't be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.^[1083]

12: 33-34 - On Treasures

- 33. Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy. Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old, a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail, where no thief approaches, neither moth destroys.
- 34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.^[1084]

12: 35-48 - Watchfulness and Faithfulness

- 35. "Let your waist be dressed and your lamps burning."^[1085]
- 36. Be like men watching for their lord, when he returns from the wedding feast; that when he comes and knocks, they may immediately open to him.
- 37. Blessed are those servants whom the lord will find watching when he comes. Most certainly I tell you that he will dress

himself, make them recline, and will come and serve them.

38. They will be blessed if he comes in the second or third watch, and finds them so. ^[1086]

39. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not allowed his house to be broken into.

40. Therefore be ready also, for the Son of Man is coming in an hour that you don't expect him." ^[1087]

41. Peter said to him, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everybody?"

42. The Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the right times?

43. Blessed is that servant whom his lord will find doing so when he comes.

44. Truly I tell you, that he will set him over all that he has.

45. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My lord delays his coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken,

46. then the lord of that servant will come in a day when he isn't expecting him, and in an hour that he doesn't know, and will cut him in two, and place his portion with the unfaithful.

47. That servant, who knew his lord's will, and didn't prepare, nor do what he wanted, will be beaten with many stripes,

48. but he who didn't know, and did things worthy of stripes, will be beaten with few stripes. To whomever much is given, of him will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him more will be asked. ^[1088]

12: 49-53 - Divisions within Households

49. "I came to throw fire on the earth. I wish it were already kindled.

50. But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

51. Do you think that I have come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, no, but rather division.

52. For from now on, there will be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." ^[1089]

12: 54-59 - On Murder and Wrath

- 54. He said to the multitudes also, "When you see a cloud rising from the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it happens.^[1090]
- 55. When a south wind blows, you say, 'There will be a scorching heat,' and it happens.
- 56. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how is it that you don't interpret this time?
- 57. Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?
- 58. For when you are going with your adversary before the magistrate, try diligently on the way to be released from him, lest perhaps he drag you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.
- 59. I tell you, you will by no means get out of there, until you have paid the very last penny."^[1091]

13: 1-9 - Repentance or Destruction (Parable of the Fig-Tree)

- 1. Now there were some present at the same time who told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.
- 2. Jesus answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things?
- 3. I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way.
- 4. Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them; do you think that they were worse offenders than all the men who dwell in Jerusalem?
- 5. I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way."^[1092]
- 6. He spoke this parable. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none.
- 7. He said to the vine dresser, 'Behold, these three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and found none. Cut it down. Why does it waste the soil?'
- 8. He answered, 'Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilise it.
- 9. If it bears fruit, fine; but if not, after that, you can cut it down.'"^[1093]

13: 10-17 - Healing of the Crippled Woman on the Sabbath

10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.
11. Behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. She was bent over, and could in no way straighten herself up.
12. When Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity."
13. He laid his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and glorified God.
14. The ruler of the synagogue, being indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the multitude, "There are six days in which men ought to work. Therefore come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day!"
15. Therefore the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each one of you free his ox or his donkey from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead him away to water?"
16. Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound eighteen long years, be freed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"
17. As he said these things, all his adversaries were disgraced,^[1094] and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.^[1095]

13: 18-19 - The Parable of the Mustard Seed

18. He said, "What is God's Kingdom like? To what shall I compare it?"^[1096]
19. It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and put in his own garden. It grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the sky live in its branches."^[1097]

13: 20-21 - The Parable of the Leaven

20. Again he said, "To what shall I compare God's Kingdom?"
21. It is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."^[1098]

13: 22-30 - Exclusion from the Kingdom

- 22. He went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and travelling on to Jerusalem.
- 23. One said to him, "Lord, are they few who are saved?" He said to them,
- 24. "Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in and will not be able."^[1099]
- 25. When once the master of the house has risen up, and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' then he will answer and tell you, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'
- 26. Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'
- 27. He will say, 'I tell you, I don't know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.'^[1100]
- 28. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in God's Kingdom, and yourselves being thrown outside.
- 29. They will come from the east, west, north, and south, and will sit down in God's Kingdom.
- 30. Behold, there are some who are last who will be first, and there are some who are first who will be last."^[1101]

13: 31-33 - A Warning against Herod

- 31. On that same day, some Pharisees came, saying to him, "Get out of here, and go away, for Herod wants to kill you."
- 32. He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I complete my mission.'
- 33. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, for it can't be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.'^[1102]

13: 34-35 - The Lament over Jerusalem

- 34. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you refused!
- 35. Behold, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name

of the Lord!" "[1103]

14: 1-6 - The Healing of the Man with Dropsy

1. When he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching him.
2. Behold, a certain man who had dropsy was in front of him.
3. Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"
4. But they were silent. He took him, and healed him, and let him go.
5. He answered them, "Which of you, if your son or an ox fell into a well, wouldn't immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"
6. They couldn't answer him regarding these things. [1104]

14: 7-14 - Teaching on Humility

7. He spoke a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the best seats, and said to them,
8. "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, don't sit in the best seat, since perhaps someone more honourable than you might be invited by him,
9. and he who invited both of you would come and tell you, 'Make room for this person.' Then you would begin, with shame, to take the lowest place.
10. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may tell you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.
11. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." [1105]
12. He also said to the one who had invited him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, don't call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your kinsmen, nor rich neighbours, or perhaps they might also return the favour, and pay you back.
13. But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind;
14. and you will be blessed, because they don't have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous." [1106]

14: 15-24 - The Parable of the Great Supper

15. When one of those who sat at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is he who will feast in God's Kingdom!"
16. But he said to him, "A certain man made a great supper, and he invited many people.
17. He sent out his servant at supper time to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.'
18. They all as one began to make excuses. "The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused.'
19. "Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go try them out. Please have me excused.'
20. "Another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I can't come.'
21. "That servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.'
22. "The servant said, 'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room.'
23. "The lord said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.
24. For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will taste of my supper.'" ^[1107]

14: 25-35 - Conditions of Discipleship

25. Now great multitudes were going with him. He turned and said to them,
26. "If anyone comes to me, and doesn't hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he can't be my disciple." ^[1108]
27. Whoever doesn't bear his own cross, and come after me, can't be my disciple.
28. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?
29. Or perhaps, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, everyone who sees begins to mock him,
30. saying, 'This man began to build, and wasn't able to finish.'
31. Or what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an envoy, and asks for conditions of peace.
33. So therefore whoever of you who doesn't renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple.^[1109]
34. Salt is good, but if the salt becomes flat and tasteless, with what do you season it?
35. It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."^[1110]

15: 1-7 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1. Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming close to him to hear him.
2. The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them."
3. He told them this parable.
4. "Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it?
5. When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
6. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'
7. I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.^[1111]

15: 8-10 - The Parable of the Lost Coin

8. Or what woman, if she had ten drachma coins, if she lost one drachma coin, wouldn't light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek diligently until she found it?
9. When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost.'
10. Even so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting."^[1112]

15: 11-32 - The Parable of the Prodigal Son

11. He said, "A certain man had two sons.
12. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of your property.' So he divided his livelihood between them.
13. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and travelled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living.
14. When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need.
15. He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs.
16. He wanted to fill his belly with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any.
17. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying with hunger!
18. I will get up and go to my father, and will tell him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight.
19. I am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants.'"
20. "He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
21. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'
22. "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet.
23. Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let's eat, and celebrate;
24. for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.' Then they began to celebrate.
25. "Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing.
26. He called one of the servants to him, and asked what was going on.
27. He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.'
28. But he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore his father came out, and begged him.
29. But he answered his father, 'Behold, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed a commandment of yours, but you never gave me a goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.
30. But when this your son came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'
31. "He said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

32. But it was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.'"^[1113]

16: 1-9 - The Parable of the Unjust Steward

1. He also said to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager. An accusation was made to him that this man was wasting his possessions.
2. He called him, and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'
3. "The manager said within himself, 'What will I do, seeing that my lord^[1114] is taking away the management position from me? I don't have strength to dig. I am ashamed to beg.
4. I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from management, they may receive me into their houses.'
5. Calling each one of his lord's debtors to him, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe to my lord?'
6. He said, 'A hundred batos of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'
7. Then he said to another, 'How much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred cors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'
8. "His lord commended the dishonest manager because he had done wisely, for the children of this world are, in their own generation, wiser than the children of the light.
9. I tell you, make for yourselves friends by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents.^[1115]

16: 10-13 - On Faithfulness in What Is Least

10. He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. He who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.
11. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?
12. If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?^[1116]
13. No servant can serve two masters,^[1117] for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and

despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and Mammon." ^[1118]

16: 14-15 - The Pharisees Reproved

14. The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they scoffed at him.
15. He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."^[1119]

16: 16-17 - On the Law and the Prophets

16. The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the Good News of God's Kingdom is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.
17. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a pen in the law to fall.^[1120]

16: 18 - On Adultery and Divorce

18. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. He who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.^[1121]

16: 19-31 - The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

19. "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day.
20. A certain beggar, named Lazarus, was taken to his gate, full of sores,
21. and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Yes, even the dogs came and licked his sores.
22. The beggar died, and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried.

23. In Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus at his bosom.
24. He cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue! For I am in anguish in this flame.'
25. "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received your good things, and Lazarus, in the same way, bad things. But here he is now comforted, and you are in anguish.
26. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that those who want to pass from here to you are not able, and that no one may cross over from there to us.'
27. "He said, 'I ask you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house;
28. for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, so they won't also come into this place of torment.'
29. "But Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.'
30. "He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'
31. "He said to him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead.'"^[1122]

17: 1-2 - Warnings Concerning Temptations

1. He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no occasions of stumbling should come, but woe to him through whom they come!
2. It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble."^[1123]

17: 3-4 - On Reconciliation

3. Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him.
4. If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."^[1124]

17: 5-6 - The Fig-Tree Is Withered

5. The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
6. The Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this sycamore tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."^[1125]

17: 7-10 - We Are Unprofitable Servants

7. But who is there among you, having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say when he comes in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down at the table,'
8. and will not rather tell him, 'Prepare my supper, clothe yourself properly, and serve me, while I eat and drink. Afterward you shall eat and drink'?
9. Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded?
10. Even so you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants. We have done our duty.'^[1126]

17: 11-19 - The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers

11. As he was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee.
12. As he entered into a certain village, ten men who were lepers met him, who stood at a distance.
13. They lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"
14. When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." As they went, they were cleansed.
15. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice.
16. He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan.
17. Jesus answered, "Weren't the ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"
18. Were there none found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"
19. Then he said to him, "Get up, and go your way. Your faith has healed you."^[1127]

17: 20-21 - On the Coming of the Kingdom of God

- 20. Being asked by the Pharisees when God's Kingdom would come, he answered them, "God's Kingdom doesn't come with observation;
- 21. neither will they say, 'Look, here!' or, 'Look, there!' for behold, God's Kingdom is within you."^[1128]

17: 22-37 - The Day of the Son of Man

- 22. He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it."^[1129]
- 23. They will tell you, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Don't go away or follow after them,
- 24. for as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part under the sky, shines to another part under the sky; so will the Son of Man be in his day.
- 25. But first, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."^[1130]
- 26. As it was in the days of Noah, even so it will also be in the days of the Son of Man.
- 27. They ate, they drank, they married, and they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ship, and the flood came and destroyed them all.
- 28. Likewise, even as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;
- 29. but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from the sky and destroyed them all.
- 30. It will be the same way in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.
- 31. In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away. Let him who is in the field likewise not turn back.
- 32. Remember Lot's wife!"^[1131]
- 33. Whoever seeks to gain his life^[1132] loses her,^[1133] but whoever loses his life preserves her."^[1134]
- 34. I tell you, in that night there will be two people in one bed. One will be taken and the other will be left.
- 35. There will be two grinding grain together. One will be taken and the other will be left."^[1135]
- 36. Two men will be in the field; the one will be taken, and the other left."^[1136]
- 37. They answering, asked him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there will the vultures also be gathered

together."

18: 1-8 - The Parable of the Unjust Judge

1. He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up,
2. saying, "There was a judge in a certain city who didn't fear God, and didn't respect man.
3. A widow was in that city, and she often came to him, saying, 'Defend me from my adversary!'
4. He wouldn't for a while, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God, nor respect man,
5. yet because this widow bothers me, I will defend her, or else she will wear me out by her continual coming.'"
6. The Lord said, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge says.
7. Won't God avenge his chosen ones who are crying out to him day and night, and yet he exercises patience with them?
8. I tell you that he will avenge them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"^[1137]

18: 9-14 - The Pharisee and the Publican

9. He also spoke this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others.
10. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector.
11. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
12. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.'
13. But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."^[1138]

18: 15-17 - Jesus Blesses the Children

15. They were also bringing their babies to him, that he might touch them. But when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.
16. Jesus summoned them, saying, "Allow the little children to come to me, and don't hinder them, for God's Kingdom belongs to such as these.
17. Most certainly, I tell you, whoever doesn't receive God's Kingdom like a little child, he will in no way enter into it."^[1139]

18: 18-23 - The Rich Young Man

18. A certain ruler asked him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
19. Jesus asked him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good, except one: God.
20. You know the commandments: 'Don't commit adultery,' 'Don't murder,' 'Don't steal,' 'Don't give false testimony,' 'Honour your father and your mother.'"
21. He said, "I have observed all these things from my youth up."
22. When Jesus heard these things, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have, and distribute it to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."
23. But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was very rich.^[1140]

18: 24-30 - On Riches and the Rewards of Discipleship

24. Jesus, seeing that he became very sad, said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into God's Kingdom!
25. For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom."
26. Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"
27. But he said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."
28. Peter said, "Look, we have left everything and followed you."
29. He said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children, for God's Kingdom's sake,
30. who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the world to come, eternal life."^[1141]

18: 31-34 - The Third Prediction of the Passion

31. He took the twelve aside, and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be completed.
32. For he will be delivered up to the Gentiles, will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit on.
33. They will scourge and kill him. On the third day, he will rise again."
34. They understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they didn't understand the things that were said.^[1142]

18: 35-43 - The Blind Man

35. As he came near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road, begging.
36. Hearing a multitude going by, he asked what this meant.
37. They told him that Jesus the Nazorean^[1143] is passing by.
38. He cried out, "Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!"
39. Those who led the way rebuked him, that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "You son of David, have mercy on me!"
40. Standing still (halted), Jesus commanded him to be brought to him. When he had come near, he asked him,
41. "What do you want me to do?" He said, "Lord, that I may see again."
42. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you."
43. Immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God. All the people, when they saw it, praised God.^[1144]

19: 1-10 – Zacchaeus

1. He entered and was passing through Jericho.
2. There was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.^[1145]
3. He was trying to see who Jesus was, and couldn't because of the crowd, because he was short.

4. He ran on ahead, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was going to pass that way.
5. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."^[1146]
6. He hurried, came down, and received him joyfully.
7. When they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a man who is a sinner."
8. Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have wrongfully exacted anything of anyone, I restore four times as much."^[1147]
9. Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.
10. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

19: 11-27 - The Parable of the Pounds

11. As they heard these things, he went on and told a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that God's Kingdom would be revealed immediately.^[1148]
12. He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."^[1149]
13. He called ten servants of his and gave them ten pounds, and told them, 'Conduct business until I come.'^[1150]
14. But his citizens hated him, and sent an envoy after him, saying, 'We don't want this man to reign over us.'^[1151]
15. "When he had come back again, having received the kingdom, he commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by conducting business.
16. The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your pounds have made ten more pounds.'
17. "He said to him, 'Well done, you good servant! Because you were found faithful with very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'
18. "The second came, saying, 'Your pounds, Lord, have made five pounds.'
19. "So he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'
20. Another came, saying, 'Lord, behold, your pounds, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief,
21. for I feared you, because you are an exacting man. You take up that which you didn't lay down, and reap that which you didn't sow.'
22. "He said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant! You knew that I am an exacting man, taking up

that which I didn't lay down, and reaping that which I didn't sow.

23. Then why didn't you deposit my money in the bank, and at my coming, I might have earned interest on it?'

24. He said to those who stood by, 'Take the pounds away from him and give it to him who has the ten pounds.'^[1152]

25. "They said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!'^[1153]

26. 'For I tell you that to everyone who has, will more be given; but from him who doesn't have, even that which he has will be taken away from him.

27. But bring those enemies of mine who didn't want me to reign over them here, and kill them before me.'^[1154]

19: 28-40 - The Triumphal Entry

28. Having said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

29. When he came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain that is called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples

30. saying, "Go your way into the village on the other side, in which, as you enter, you will find a colt tied, which no man had ever sat upon. Untie it and bring it.

31. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say to him: 'The Lord needs it.'"

32. Those who were sent went away, and found things just as he had told them.

33. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

34. They said, "The Lord needs it."

35. Then they brought it to Jesus. They threw their cloaks on the colt, and sat Jesus on it.

36. As he went, they spread their cloaks on the road.

37. As he was now getting near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen,^[1155]

38. saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!"

39. Some of the Pharisees from the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

40. He answered them, "I tell you that if these were silent, the stones would cry out."^[1156]

19: 41-44 - Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

6. But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet."
7. They answered that they didn't know where it was from.
8. Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." ^[1161]

20: 9-19 - The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

9. He began to tell the people this parable. "A man planted a vineyard, and rented it out to some farmers, and went into another country for a long time.
10. At the proper season, he sent a servant to the farmers to collect his share of the fruit of the vineyard. But the farmers beat him, and sent him away empty.
11. He sent yet another servant, and they also beat him, and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.
12. He sent yet a third, and they also wounded him, and threw him out.
13. The lord^[1162] of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. It may be that seeing him, they will respect him.'
14. "But when the farmers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.'
15. Then they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do to them?
16. He will come and destroy these farmers, and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard that, they said, "May that never be!"^[1163]
17. But he looked at them and said, "Then what is this that is written, 'The stone which the builders rejected was made the chief cornerstone?'"
18. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but it will crush.^[1164]
19. The chief priests and the scribes sought to lay hands on him that very hour, but they feared the people—for they knew he had spoken this parable against them.

20: 20-26 - On Paying Tribute to Caesar

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20: 20-26 - On Paying Tribute to Caesar

- 20. They watched him and sent out spies, who pretended to be righteous, that they might trap him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the power and authority of the governor.^[1165]
- 21. They asked him, "Teacher, we know that you say and teach what is right, and aren't partial to anyone, but truly teach the way of God.
- 22. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"
- 23. But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them,
- 24. Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?" They answered, "Caesar's."
- 25. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."
- 26. They weren't able to trap him in his words before the people. They marvelled at his answer and were silent.

20: 27-40 - The Question about the Resurrection

- 27. Some of the Sadducees came to him, those who deny that there is a resurrection.
- 28. They asked him, "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up children for his brother.
- 29. There were therefore seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died childless.
- 30. and the second
- 31. The third took her, and likewise the seven all left no children, and died.
- 32. Afterward the woman also died.
- 33. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them will she be? For the seven had her as a wife."
- 34. Jesus said to them, "The children of this age marry, and are given in marriage.
- 35. But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.
- 36. For they can't die any more, for they are like the angels, and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.
- 37. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'
- 38. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all are alive to him."
- 39. Some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you speak well."

40. They didn't dare to ask him any more questions.^[1166]

20: 41-44 - The Question about David's Son

41. He said to them, "Why do they say that the Christ is David's son?
42. David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,
43. until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet."
44. "David therefore calls him Lord, so how is he his son?"^[1167]

20: 45-47 - Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

45. In the hearing of all the people, he said to his disciples,
46. "Beware of those scribes who like to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts;
47. who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these will receive greater condemnation."^[1168]

21: 1-4 - The Widow's Mite

1. He looked up and saw the rich people who were putting their gifts into the treasury.
2. He saw a certain poor widow casting in two small brass coins.
3. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them,
4. for all these put in gifts for God from their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on."^[1169]

21: 5-6 - Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple

5. As some were talking about the Temple and how it was decorated with beautiful stones and gifts, he said,
6. "As for these things which you see, the days will come, in which there will not be left here one stone on another that will not be thrown down."^[1170]

21: 7-11 - Signs before the End

7. They asked him, "Teacher, so when will these things be? What is the sign that these things are about to happen?"
8. He said, "Watch out that you don't get led astray, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is at hand.' Therefore don't follow them.
9. When you hear of wars and disturbances, don't be terrified, for these things must happen first, but the end won't come immediately."
10. Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
11. There will be great earthquakes, famines, and plagues in various places. There will be terrors and great signs from heaven."^[1171]

21: 12-19 - The Fate of the Disciples

12. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake.
13. It will turn out as a testimony for you.
14. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate beforehand how to answer,
15. for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to withstand or to contradict.
16. You will be handed over even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will cause some of you to be put to death.
17. You will be hated by all men for my name's sake.
18. And not a hair of your head will perish.
19. "By your endurance you will win your lives."^[1172]

21: 20-24 - The Desolating Sacrilege

- 20. "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is at hand. ^[1173]
- 21. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in the middle of her depart. Let those who are in the country not enter therein.
- 22. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.
- 23. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who nurse infants in those days! For there will be great distress in the land, and wrath to this people.
- 24. They will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.^[1174]

21: 25-28 - The Coming of the Son of Man

- 25. There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and on the earth anxiety of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the waves;
- 26. men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- 27. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
- 28. But when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near."^[1175]

21: 29-33 - The Parable of the Fig-Tree

- 29. He told them a parable. "See the fig tree and all the trees.
- 30. When they are already budding, you see it and know by your own selves that the summer is already near.
- 31. Even so you also, when you see these things happening, know that God's Kingdom is near.
- 32. Most certainly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things are accomplished.
- 33. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.^[1176]

21: 34-36 - Watchfulness and Faithfulness

34. "So be careful, or your hearts will be loaded down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day will come on you suddenly.
35. For it will come like a snare on all those who dwell on the surface of all the earth.
36. Therefore be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."^[1177]

21: 37-38 - The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem

37. Every day Jesus was teaching in the temple, and every night he would go out and spend the night on the mountain that is called Olivet.
38. All the people came early in the morning to him in the Temple to hear him.^[1178]

22: 1-2 - Chief Priests and Pharisees Take Counsel against Jesus

1. Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.
2. The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death, for they feared the people.^[1179]

22: 3-6 - The Betrayal by Judas

3. Satan entered into Judas, who was also called Iscariot, who was counted with the twelve.
4. He went away, and talked with the chief priests and captains about how he might deliver him to them.
5. They were glad, and agreed to give him money.
6. He consented, and sought an opportunity to deliver him to them in the absence of the multitude.^[1180]

22: 7-14 - Preparation for the Passover

7. The day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed.
8. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."
9. They said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare?"
10. He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him into the house which he enters.
11. Tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'
12. He will show you a large, furnished upper room. Make preparations there."
13. They went, found things as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the Passover.
14. When the hour had come, he sat down with the twelve apostles.^[1181]

22: 15-20 - The Last Supper

15. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,
16. for I tell you, I will no longer by any means eat of it until it is fulfilled in God's Kingdom." ^[1182]
17. He received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, "Take this, and share it among yourselves,
18. for I tell you, I will not drink at all again from the fruit of the vine, until God's Kingdom comes."
19. He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me."
20. Likewise, he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ^[1183]

22: 21-23 - Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

21. But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table.
22. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it has been determined, but woe to that man through whom he is betrayed!"

23. They began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.^[1184]

22: 24-30 - Sons of Zebedee; Precedence among the Disciples

24. A dispute also arose among them, which of them was considered to be greatest.^[1185]

25. He said to them, "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called 'benefactors.'

26. But not so with you. But one who is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and one who is governing, as one who serves.

27. For who is greater, one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Isn't it he who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28. But you are those who have continued with me in my trials.

29. I confer on you a kingdom, even as my Father conferred on me,^[1186]

30. "That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on the thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."^[1187]

22: 31-34 - Peter's Denial Predicted

31. The Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat,

32. but I prayed for you, that your faith wouldn't fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers."

33. He said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!"

34. He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will by no means crow today until you deny that you know me three times."^[1188]

22: 35-38 - The Two Swords

35. He said to them, "When I sent you out without purse, wallet, and sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing."^[1189]

36. Then he said to them, "But now, whoever has a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet. Whoever has none, let him sell

his cloak, and buy a sword.

37. For I tell you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me: 'He was counted with transgressors. For that which concerns me has an end.'
38. They said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." He said to them, "That is enough."^[1190]

22: 39-46 – Gethsemane

39. He came out and went, as his custom was, to the Mount of Olives. His disciples also followed him.
40. When he was at the place, he said to them, "Pray that you don't enter into temptation."
41. He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed,
42. saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."^[1191]
43. An angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him.
44. Being in agony he prayed more earnestly. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.
45. When he rose up from his prayer, he came to the disciples, and found them sleeping because of grief,^[1192]
46. and said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."^[1193]

22: 47-53 - Jesus' Arrest

47. While he was still speaking, a crowd appeared. He who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He came near to Jesus to kiss him.
48. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"^[1194]
49. When those who were around him saw what was about to happen, they said to him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"
50. A certain one of them struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.
51. But Jesus answered, "Enough of this!"^[1195]—and he touched his ear, and healed him.^[1196]
52. Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders, who had come against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"
53. When I was with you in the Temple daily, you didn't stretch out your hands against me. But this is your hour, and the power of

darkness."^[1197]

22: 54-71 - Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Peter's Denial)

- 54. They seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed from a distance.
- 55. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and had sat down together, Peter sat among them.
- 56. A certain servant girl saw him as he sat in the light, and looking intently at him, said, "This man also was with him."
- 57. He denied Jesus, saying, "Woman, I don't know him.""
- 58. After a little while someone else saw him, and said, "You also are one of them!" But Peter answered, "Man, I am not!"
- 59. After about one hour passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Truly this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean!"
- 60. But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.
- 61. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how he said to him, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times."
- 62. He went out, and wept bitterly.^[1198]
- 63. The men who held Jesus mocked him and beat him.
- 64. Having blindfolded him, they struck him on the face and asked him, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck you?"
- 65. They spoke many other things against him, insulting him.
- 66. As soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people were gathered together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him away into their council, saying,^[1199]
- 67. "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you won't believe,
- 68. and if I ask you, you will not answer.
- 69. From now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."^[1200]
- 70. They all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say it, because I am."
- 71. They said, "Why do we need any more witness? For we ourselves have heard from his own mouth!"^[1201]

23: 1-5 - The Trial before Pilate

1. The whole company of them rose up and brought him before Pilate.^[1202]
2. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting the nation, forbidding paying taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king."^[1203]
3. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "So you say."
4. Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."^[1204]
5. But they insisted, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to this place."

23: 6-12 - Jesus before Herod

6. But when Pilate heard Galilee mentioned, he asked if the man was a Galilean.
7. When he found out that he was in Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.^[1205]
8. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad, for he had wanted to see him for a long time, because he had heard many things about him. He hoped to see some miracle done by him.
9. He questioned him with many words, but he gave no answers.
10. The chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him.
11. Herod with his soldiers humiliated him and mocked him. Dressing him in luxurious clothing, they sent him back to Pilate.
12. Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before that they were enemies with each other.^[1206]

23: 13-16 - Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent

13. Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people,
14. and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one that perverts the people, and behold, having examined him before you, I found no basis for a charge against this man concerning those things of which you accuse him.
15. Neither has Herod, for I sent you to him, and see, nothing worthy of death has been done by him.
16. I will therefore chastise him and release him."^[1207]

23: 17-23 - Jesus or Barabbas

17. Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people,^[1208]
18. But they all cried out together, saying, "Away with this man! Release to us Barabbas!"— ^[1209]
19. one who was thrown into prison for a certain revolt in the city, and for murder.
20. Then Pilate spoke to them again, wanting to release Jesus,
21. but they shouted, saying, "Crucify! Crucify him!"
22. He said to them the third time, "Why? What evil has this man done? I have found no capital crime in him. I will therefore chastise him and release him."
23. But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. Their voices and the voices of the chief priests prevailed.^[1210]

23: 24-25 - Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

24. Pilate decreed that what they asked for should be done.
25. He released him who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus up to their will.^[1211]

23: 26-32 - The Road to Golgotha

26. When they led him away, they grabbed one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it after Jesus.
27. A great multitude of the people followed him, including women who also mourned and lamented him.^[1212]
28. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.
29. For behold, the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'
30. Then they will begin to tell the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and tell the hills, 'Cover us.'^[1213]

- 31. For if they do these things in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?"^[1214]
- 32. There were also others, two criminals, led with him to be put to death.

23: 33-34 - The Crucifixion

- 33. When they came to the place that is called "The Skull", they crucified him there with the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.
- 34. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." Dividing his garments among them, they cast lots.^[1215]

23: 35-37 - Jesus Derided on the Cross

- 35. The people stood watching. The rulers with them also scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen one!"
- 36. The soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar,
- 37. and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"^[1216]

23: 38-43 - The Two Thieves

- 38. There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."
- 39. One of the criminals who was hanged insulted him, saying, "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!"
- 40. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Don't you even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"
- 41. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."
- 42. He said, "Jesus,^[1217] remember me when you come into your Kingdom."
- 43. And he spoke to him: "Truly I say to you, today with me you will be in Paradise."^[1218]

23: 44-48 - The 'Death' of Jesus

- 44. It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.^[1219]
- 45. The sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was torn in two.^[1220]
- 46. Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" Having said this, he breathed his last.^[1221]
- 47. When the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man."^[1222]
- 48. All the multitudes that came together to see this, when they saw the things that were done, returned home beating their breasts.^[1223]

23: 49-56 - The Burial of Jesus

- 49. All his acquaintances and the women who followed with him from Galilee stood at a distance, watching these things.
- 50. Behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the council, a good and righteous man,
- 51. (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), from Arimathaea, a city of the Jews, who was also waiting for God's Kingdom:
- 52. this man went to Pilate, and asked for Jesus' body.
- 53. He took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was cut in stone, where no one had ever been laid.
- 54. It was the day of the Preparation, and the Sabbath was drawing near.
- 55. The women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid.
- 56. They returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.^[1224]

24: 1-12 - The Women at the Tomb

- 1. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared.
- 2. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.
- 3. They entered in, and didn't find the body.

4. While they were greatly perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling clothing.
5. Becoming terrified, they bowed their faces down to the earth. They said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?
6. He isn't here, but is risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee,
7. saying that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again?"^[1225]
8. They remembered his words,
9. returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.
10. Now they were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. The other women with them told these things to the apostles.
11. These words seemed to them to be nonsense, and they didn't believe them.^[1226]
12. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Stooping and looking in, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he departed to his home, wondering what had happened.^[1227]

24: 13-35 - Jesus Appears to Two on the Way to Emmaus

13. Behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty furlongs^[1228] from Jerusalem,^[1229]
14. They talked with each other about all of these things which had happened.
15. While they talked and questioned together, Jesus himself came near, and went with them.
16. But their eyes were kept from recognising him.^[1230]
17. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.
18. And one of them named Cleopas^[1231] answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things which have happened there in these days?"
19. He said to them, "What things?" They said to him, "The things concerning Jesus, the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people;^[1232]
20. and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.
21. But we were hoping that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.^[1233]
22. Also, certain women of our company amazed us, having arrived early at the tomb;

- 23. and when they didn't find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.
- 24. Some of us went to the tomb, and found it just like the women had said, but they didn't see him."
- 25. He said to them, "Foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!
- 26. Didn't the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"^[1234]
- 27. Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.^[1235]
- 28. They came near to the village where they were going, and he acted like he would go further.
- 29. They urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." He went in to stay with them.
- 30. When he had sat down at the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave it to them.^[1236]
- 31. Their eyes were opened and they recognised him, then he vanished out of their sight.
- 32. They said to one another, "Weren't our hearts burning within us, while he spoke to us along the way, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?"
- 33. They rose up that very hour, returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them,
- 34. saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"
- 35. They related the things that happened along the way, and how he was recognised by them in the breaking of the bread.^[1237]

24: 36-43 - Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Thomas Absent)

- 36. As they said these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be to you."^[1238]
- 37. But they were terrified and filled with fear, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.^[1239]
- 38. He said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?
- 39. See my hands and my feet, that it is truly me. Touch me and see, for a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see that I have."^[1240]
- 40. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.^[1241]
- 41. While they still didn't believe for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"
- 42. They gave him a piece of broiled fish,
- 43. He took it, and ate in front of them.^[1242]

24: 44-53 - End of Luke: Jesus' Last Words and Ascension

44. And he spoke to them: "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was being with you, that it is necessary *to* fulfil all that has been written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me."^[1243]
45. Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures.
46. He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,
47. and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem."^[1244]
48. You are witnesses of these things.
49. Behold, I send out the promise of my Father on you. But wait in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high."^[1245]
50. He led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.
51. While he blessed them, he withdrew from them, and was carried up into heaven.^[1246]
52. They paid homage^[1247] to him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,^[1248]
53. and were continually in the Temple blessing God.^[1249]

The Gospel According to John

1: 1-18 - Prologue

1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and divine^[1250] was the word.^[1251]
2. He was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made.^[1252]
4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.^[1253]
5. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.^[1254]
6. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.
7. The same came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him.
8. He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the light.
9. The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.^[1255]
10. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognise him.
11. He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him.
12. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name:^[1256]
13. who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.^[1257]
14. The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.^[1258]
15. John testified about him. He cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me, for he was before me.'
16. From his fullness we all received grace upon grace.^[1259]
17. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realised through Jesus Christ.
18. No one has seen God at any time. The only God^[1260], who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared him.^[1261]

1: 19-23 - John the Baptist

19. This is John's testimony, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"^[1262]
20. He declared, and didn't deny, but he declared, "I am not the Christ."^[1263]
21. They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."^[1264]
22. They said therefore to him, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"
23. He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."^[1265]

1: 24-28 - John's Messianic Preaching

24. The ones who had been sent were from the Pharisees.
25. They asked him, "Why then do you baptise, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"^[1266]
26. John answered them, "I baptise in water, but among you stands one whom you don't know.
27. He is the one who comes after me, who is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to loosen."^[1267]
28. These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising.

1: 29-34 - The Baptism of Jesus

29. The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the lamb^[1268] of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"^[1269]
30. This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.'
31. I didn't know him, but for this reason I came baptising in water: that he would be revealed to Israel.^[1270]
32. John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him."^[1271]
33. I didn't recognise him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'On whomever you will see the Spirit descending and remaining on him is he who baptises in the Holy Spirit.'^[1272]
34. I have seen, and have testified that this is the chosen one of God."^[1273]

1: 35-51 - The Call of the Disciples

35. Again, the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples,
36. and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"^[1274]
37. The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
38. Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), "where are you staying?"
39. He said to them, "Come, and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about the tenth hour.^[1275]
40. One of the two who heard John and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
41. He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (which is, being the interpreted, Christ).
42. He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas," which is by interpretation, a rock (Peter).^[1276]
43. On the next day, he was determined to go out into Galilee, and he found Philip,^[1277] Jesus said to him: "Follow me."^[1278]
44. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.
45. Philip found Nathanael ^[1279] and said to him: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."^[1280]
46. Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."
47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"
48. Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."
49. Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are King of Israel!"^[1281]
50. Jesus answered him, "Because I told you, 'I saw you underneath the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these!"
51. He said to him, "Most certainly, I tell you all, hereafter you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."^[1282]

2: 1-11 - The Marriage at Cana

1. The third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there.^[1283]
2. Jesus also was invited, with his disciples, to the wedding.
3. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine."^[1284]
4. Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My hour has not yet come."
5. His mother said to the servants, "Whatever he says to you, do it."^[1285]
6. Now there were six water pots of stone set there after the Jews' way of purifying, containing two or three^[1286] each.
7. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." So they filled them up to the brim.
8. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the ruler of the feast." So they took it.
9. When the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and didn't know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast called the bridegroom
10. and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is worse. You have kept the good wine until now!"
11. This beginning of his signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.^[1287]

2: 12-22 - The Cleansing of the Temple

12. After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they stayed there a few days.^[1288]
13. The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
14. He found in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting.^[1289]
15. He made a whip of cords, and threw all out of the Temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables.
16. To those who sold the doves, he said, "Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a marketplace!"
17. His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will eat me up."^[1290]
18. The Jews therefore answered him, "What sign do you show us, seeing that you do these things?"
19. Jesus answered them, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
20. The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this Temple! Will you raise it up in three days?"
21. But he spoke of the temple of his body.^[1291]

22. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.^[1292]

2: 23-25 - Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem

23. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name, observing his signs which he did.
24. But Jesus didn't entrust himself to them, because he knew everyone,
25. and because he didn't need for anyone to testify concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man.^[1293]

3: 1-21 - The Discourse with Nicodemus

1. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.^[1294]
2. The same came to him by night, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him."^[1295]
3. Jesus answered him, "Most certainly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can't see God's Kingdom."
4. Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"
5. Jesus answered, "Most certainly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into God's Kingdom.
6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
7. Don't marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.'
8. The wind^[1296] blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but don't know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."^[1297]
9. Nicodemus answered him, "How can these things be?"
10. Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and don't understand these things?
11. Most certainly I tell you, we speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen, and you don't receive our witness.
12. If I told you earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13. No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man.^[1298]
14. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
15. that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.^[1299]
16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ^[1300]
17. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him.
18. He who believes in him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.^[1301]
19. This is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.
20. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and doesn't come to the light, lest his works would be exposed.^[1302]
21. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be revealed, that they have been done in God."^[1303]

3: 22-36 - John's Testimony to Christ

22. After these things, Jesus came with his disciples into the land of Judea. He stayed there with them and baptised.^[1304]
23. John also was baptising in Enon near Salim, because there was much water there. They came, and were baptised;^[1305]
24. for John was not yet thrown into prison.^[1306]
25. Therefore a dispute arose on the part of John's disciples with some Jews about purification.
26. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, he baptises, and everyone is coming to him."^[1307]
27. John answered, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.
28. You yourselves testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before him.'
29. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This, my joy, therefore is made full.
30. He must increase, but I must decrease.^[1308]
31. He who comes from above is above all. He who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.^[1309]

32. What he has seen and heard, of that he testifies; and no one receives his witness.^[1310]
33. He who has received his witness has set his seal to this, that God is true.
34. For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for God gives the Spirit without measure.
35. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.
36. One who believes in the Son has eternal life, but one who disbelieving^[1311] the Son won't see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."^[1312]

4: 1-3 - Ministry in Galilee

1. Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptising more disciples than John^[1313]
2. (although Jesus himself didn't baptise, but his disciples),^[1314]
3. he left Judea and departed into Galilee.

4: 4-42 - The Discourse with the Woman of Samaria

4. He needed to pass through Samaria.^[1315]
5. So he came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son, Joseph.
6. Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being tired from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.
7. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."^[1316]
8. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.
9. The Samaritan woman therefore said to him, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)^[1317]
10. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."
11. The woman said to him, "Lord,^[1318] you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. So where do you get that living water?"
12. Are you greater than our father, Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his children and his livestock?"

13. Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again,
14. but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."
15. The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I don't get thirsty, neither come all the way here to draw."^[1319]
16. Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."
17. The woman answered, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You said well, 'I have no husband,'
18. for you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have is not your husband. This you have said truly."
19. The woman said to him: "Lord, I perceive that you are a prophet.
20. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."^[1320]
21. Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, will you worship the Father."^[1321]
22. You worship that which you don't know. We worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews."^[1322]
23. But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshipers."^[1323]
24. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."
25. The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah comes, he who is called Christ. When he has come, he will declare to us all things."
26. Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who speaks to you."
27. At this, his disciples came. They marvelled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What are you looking for?" or, "Why do you speak with her?"
28. So the woman left her water pot, went away into the city, and said to the people,^[1324]
29. "Come, see a man who told me everything that I did. Can this be the Christ?"
30. They went out of the city, and were coming to him.
31. In the meanwhile, the disciples urged him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."
32. But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."
33. The disciples therefore said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?"
34. Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.
35. Don't you say, 'There are yet four months until the harvest?' Behold, I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, that they are white for harvest already.

- 36. He who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit to eternal life; that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.
- 37. For in this the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'
- 38. I sent you to reap that for which you haven't laboured. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour."
- 39. From that city many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, "He told me everything that I did."^[1325]
- 40. So when the Samaritans came to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed there two days.
- 41. Many more believed because of his word.
- 42. They said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of your speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."^[1326]

4: 43-45 - Jesus Received in Galilee

- 43. After the two days he went out from there and went into Galilee.
- 44. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country.^[1327]
- 45. So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they also went to the feast.^[1328]

4: 46-54 - The Centurion of Capernaum

- 46. Jesus came therefore again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine. There was a certain nobleman whose son^[1329] was sick in Capernaum.^[1330]
- 47. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to him, and begged him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.
- 48. Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will in no way believe."
- 49. The nobleman said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."
- 50. Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.
- 51. As he was now going down, his servants met him and reported, saying "Your child lives!"

52. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour,^[1331] the fever left him."
53. So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." He believed, as did his whole house.
54. This is again the second sign^[1332] that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee.^[1333]

5: 1-47 - The Healing at the Pool

1. After these things, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.^[1334]
2. Now in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, there is a pool, which is called in Hebrew, "Bethesda", having five porches.
3. In these lay a great multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, or paralysed,
4. for an angel went down at certain times into the pool and stirred up the water. Whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. ^[1335]
5. A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years.
6. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been sick for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to be made well?"
7. The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I'm coming, another steps down before me."
8. Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your mat, and walk."
9. Immediately, the man was made well, and took up his mat and walked. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.^[1336]
10. So the Jews said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry the mat."
11. He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'"
12. Then they asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your mat and walk'?"
13. But he who was healed didn't know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a crowd being in the place.^[1337]
14. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you are made well. Sin no more, so that nothing worse happens to you."^[1338]
15. The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.
16. For this cause the Jews were persecuting^[1339] Jesus, because he did these things on the Sabbath.^[1340]
17. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, so I am working, too."^[1341]
18. For this cause therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God

his own Father, making himself equal with God.^[1342]

19. Jesus therefore answered them, "Most certainly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father doing. For whatever things he does, these the Son also does likewise.
20. For the Father has affection for the Son, and shows him all things that he himself does. He will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel.^[1343]
21. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom he desires.
22. For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgement to the Son,^[1344]
23. that all may honor the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who doesn't honour the Son doesn't honour the Father who sent him.
24. "Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and doesn't come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life.
25. Most certainly I tell you, the hour comes, and now is, when the dead will hear the Son of God's voice; and those who hear will live.^[1345]
26. For as the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself.
27. He also gave him authority to execute judgement, because he is a son of man.^[1346]
28. Don't marvel at this, for the hour comes in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice,
29. and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement.
30. I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgement is righteous; because I don't seek my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.^[1347]
31. "If I testify about myself, my witness is not valid.
32. It is another who testifies about me. I know that the testimony which he testifies about me is true.^[1348]
33. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.
34. But the testimony which I receive is not from man. However, I say these things that you may be saved.^[1349]
35. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.
36. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John, for the works which the Father gave me to accomplish, the very works that I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me.
37. The Father himself, who sent me, has testified about me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form.^[1350]
38. You don't have his word living in you, because you don't believe him whom he sent.

39. "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me.^[1351]
40. Yet you will not come to me, that you may have life.
41. I don't receive glory from men.
42. But I know you, that you don't have God's love in yourselves.
43. I have come in my Father's name, and you don't receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.^[1352]
44. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and you don't seek the glory that comes from the only God?
45. "Don't think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, even Moses, on whom you have set your hope.
46. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me.
47. But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"^[1353]

6: 1-15 - Five Thousand Are Fed

1. After these things, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is also called the sea of Tiberias.^[1354]
2. A great multitude followed him, because they saw his signs which he did on those who were sick.
3. Jesus went up into the mountain, and he sat there with his disciples.
4. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ^[1355]
5. Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"
6. He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.
7. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may receive a little."
8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him,
9. "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these among so many?"
10. Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in that place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
11. Jesus took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting down; likewise also of the fish as much as they desired.
12. When they were filled, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which are left over, that nothing be lost."
13. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.^[1356]

14. When therefore the people saw the sign which Jesus did, they said, "This is truly the prophet who comes into the world."
15. Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain by himself.^[1357]

6: 16-21 - The Walking on Water

16. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea.
17. They entered into the boat, and were going over the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not come to them.
18. The sea was tossed by a great wind blowing.
19. When therefore they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing near to the boat; and they were afraid.
20. But he said to them, "It is I. Don't be afraid."
21. They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat. Immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.^[1358]

6: 22-25 - Healing at Gennesaret

22. On the next day, the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except the one in which his disciples had embarked, and that Jesus hadn't entered with his disciples into the boat, but his disciples had gone away alone.
23. However boats from Tiberias came near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.
24. When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus wasn't there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
25. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"^[1359]

6: 26-59 - The Bread of Life

26. Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. ^[1360]
27. Don't work for the food which perishes, but for the food which remains to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has set his seal^[1361] on him."
28. They said therefore to him, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?"
29. Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."
30. They said therefore to him, "What then do you do for a sign, that we may see and believe you? What work do you do?"
31. Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'^[1362]
32. Jesus therefore said to them, "Most certainly, I tell you, it wasn't Moses who gave you the bread out of heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread out of heaven.
33. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
34. They said therefore to him, "Lord, always give us this bread."
35. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.^[1363]
36. But I told you that you have seen me, and yet you don't believe.
37. All those whom the Father gives me will come to me. He who comes to me I will in no way throw out.
38. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.
39. This is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all he has given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise him up at the last day.
40. This is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes in him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."^[1364]
41. The Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down out of heaven."
42. They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say, 'I have come down out of heaven?'"
43. Therefore Jesus answered them, "Don't murmur among yourselves.
44. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day.
45. It is written in the prophets, 'They will all be taught by God.'^[1365] Therefore everyone who hears from the Father and has learned, comes to me.
46. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God. He has seen the Father.

47. Most certainly, I tell you, he who believes in me has eternal life.
48. I am the bread of life.
49. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died.^[1366]
50. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, that anyone may eat of him^[1367] and not die.
51. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. Yes, the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."
52. The Jews therefore contended with one another, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
53. Jesus therefore said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you don't have life in yourselves.
54. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.
55. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.
56. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him.
57. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who feeds on me, he will also live because of me.
58. This is the bread which came down out of heaven—not as our fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eats this bread will live forever."
59. He said these things in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.^[1368]

6: 60-66 - Many Disciples Take Offence at Jesus

60. Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying! Who can listen to him?"^[1369]
61. But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?
62. Then what if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?
63. It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and are life.
64. But there are some of you who don't believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who didn't believe, and who it was who would betray him.
65. He said, "For this cause I have said to you that no one can come to me, unless it is given to him by my Father."
66. At this, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.^[1370]

6: 67-71 - Peter's Confession

- 67. Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You don't also want to go away, do you?"
- 68. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life.
- 69. We have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."^[1371]
- 70. Jesus answered them, "Didn't I choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"
- 71. Now he spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for it was he who would betray him, being one of the twelve.^[1372]

7: 1-9 - Jesus Remains in Galilee

- 1. After these things, Jesus was walking in Galilee, for he wouldn't walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.^[1373]
- 2. Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand.^[1374]
- 3. His brothers therefore said to him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that your disciples also may see your works which you do.
- 4. For no one does anything in secret while he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world."
- 5. For even his brothers didn't believe in him.^[1375]
- 6. Jesus therefore said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.
- 7. The world can't hate you, but it hates me, because I testify about it, that its works are evil.
- 8. You go up to the feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled."
- 9. Having said these things to them, he stayed in Galilee.^[1376]

7: 10-13 - Journey to Jerusalem in Secret

- 10. But when his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but as it were in secret.
- 11. The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?"
- 12. There was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others said, "Not so, but he leads the multitude astray."
- 13. Yet no one spoke openly of him for fear of the Jews.^[1377]

7: 14-39 - Teaching in the Temple

14. But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.^[1378]
15. The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, "How does this man know letters, having never been educated?"^[1379]
16. Jesus therefore answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.
17. If anyone desires to do his will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is from God, or if I am speaking from myself.
18. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."^[1380]
19. Didn't Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill me?"
20. The multitude answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill you?"^[1381]
21. Jesus answered them, "I did one work and you all marvel because of it.
22. Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a boy.
23. If a boy receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me, because I made a man completely healthy on the Sabbath?
24. Don't judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement."^[1382]
25. Therefore some of them of Jerusalem said, "Isn't this he whom they seek to kill?
26. Behold, he speaks openly, and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is truly the Christ?"^[1383]
27. However we know where this man comes from, but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from."^[1384]
28. Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know me, and know where I am from. I have not come of myself, but he who sent me is true, whom you don't know.
29. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me."^[1385]
30. They sought therefore to take him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.
31. But of the multitude, many believed in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, he won't do more signs than those which this man has done, will he?"^[1386]
32. The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.
33. Then Jesus said, "I will be with you a little while longer, then I go to him who sent me.
34. You will seek me, and won't find me. You can't come where I am."
35. The Jews therefore said among themselves, "Where will this man go that we won't find him? Will he go to the Dispersion

among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"[1387]

- 36. What is this word that he said, 'You will seek me, and won't find me;' and 'Where I am, you can't come?'"[1388]
- 37. Now on the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink!
- 38. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water."
- 39. But he said this about the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus wasn't yet glorified.[1389]

7: 40-52 - The Division among the People Regarding Jesus

- 40. Many of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, "This is truly the prophet." [1390]
- 41. Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "The Christ cannot come from Galilee can he?" [1391]
- 42. Hasn't the Scripture said that the Christ comes of the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" [1392]
- 43. So a division arose in the multitude because of him.
- 44. Some of them would have arrested him, but no one laid hands on him. [1393]
- 45. The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why didn't you bring him?"
- 46. The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!"
- 47. The Pharisees therefore answered them, "You aren't also led astray, are you?
- 48. Have any of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees?
- 49. But this multitude that doesn't know the law is cursed." [1394]
- 50. Nicodemus (he who came to him by night, being one of them) said to them,
- 51. "Does our law judge a man, unless it first hears from him personally and knows what he does?"
- 52. They answered him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search, and see that no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." [1395]

7: 53-8:11 - The Woman Caught in Adultery

- 53. Everyone went to his own house,

John 8: 1-11

1. but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
2. Now very early in the morning, he came again into the Temple, and all the people came to him. He sat down and taught them.
3. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery. Having set her in the middle,
4. they told him, "Teacher, we found this woman in adultery, in the very act.
5. Now in our law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do you say about her?"
6. They said this testing him, that they might have something to accuse him of. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger.
7. But when they continued asking him, he looked up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her."
8. Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger.
9. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.
10. Jesus, standing up, saw her and said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?"
11. She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way. From now on, sin no more."^[1396]

8: 12-20 - "I Am the Light of the World"

12. Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."^[1397]
13. The Pharisees therefore said to him, "You testify about yourself. Your testimony is not valid."^[1398]
14. Jesus answered them, "Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you don't know where I came from, or where I am going.
15. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one.
16. Even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me."^[1399]
17. It's also written in your law that the testimony of two people is valid.^[1400]
18. I am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me."^[1401]
19. They said therefore to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me,

you would know my Father also."^[1402]

20. Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. Yet no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.^[1403]

8: 21-29 - Discussion with the Jews

21. Jesus said therefore again to them, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sins. Where I go, you can't come."^[1404]
22. The Jews therefore said, "Will he kill himself, because he says, 'Where I am going, you can't come'?"^[1405]
23. He said to them, "You are from beneath. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world."^[1406]
24. I said therefore to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am he^[1407] you will die in your sins."^[1408]
25. They said therefore to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. ^[1409]
26. I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you. However he who sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these I say to the world."^[1410]
27. They didn't understand that he spoke to them about the Father.
28. Jesus therefore said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing of myself, but as my Father taught me, I say these things.
29. He who sent me is with me. The Father hasn't left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."^[1411]

8: 30-36 - "The Truth Will Make You Free"

30. As he spoke these things, many believed in him.^[1412]
31. Jesus therefore said to those Jews who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples.
32. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."^[1413]
33. They answered him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How do you say, 'You will be made free'?"^[1414]
34. Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the bondservant of sin.

- 35. A bondservant doesn't live in the house forever. A son remains forever.^[1415]
- 36. If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

8: 37-47 - Children of the Devil

- 37. I know that you are Abraham's offspring, yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you.^[1416]
- 38. I say the things which I have seen with my Father; and you also do the things which you have seen with your father."
- 39. They answered him, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.^[1417]
- 40. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham didn't do this.
- 41. You do the works of your father." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father, God."^[1418]
- 42. Therefore Jesus said to them, "If God were your father, you would love me, for I came out and have come from God. For I haven't come of myself, but he sent me.
- 43. Why don't you understand my speech? Because you can't hear my word.
- 44. You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.^[1419]
- 45. But because I tell the truth, you don't believe me.
- 46. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ^[1420]
- 47. He who is of God hears the words of God. For this cause you don't hear, because you are not of God."^[1421]

8: 48-59 - "Before Abraham Was, I Am"

- 48. Then the Jews answered him, "Don't we say well that you are a Samaritan, and have a demon?"
- 49. Jesus answered, "I don't have a demon, but I honour my Father and you dishonor me.^[1422]
- 50. But I don't seek my own glory. There is one who seeks and judges.^[1423]
- 51. Most certainly, I tell you, if a person keeps my word, he will never see death."

52. Then the Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and you say, 'If a man keeps my word, he will never taste of death.' [1424]
53. Are you greater than our father, Abraham, who died? The prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be?" [1425]
54. Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is our God.
55. You have not known him, but I know him. If I said, 'I don't know him,' I would be like you, a liar. But I know him and keep his word.
56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it, and was glad." [1426]
57. The Jews therefore said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old! Have you seen Abraham?" [1427]
58. Jesus said to them, "Most certainly, I tell you, before Abraham came into existence, I AM." [1428]
59. So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple. [1429]

9: 1-41 - Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind

1. As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. [1430]
2. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" [1431]
3. Jesus answered, "This man didn't sin, nor did his parents; but, that the works of God might be revealed in him. [1432]
4. I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. [1433]
5. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." [1434]
6. When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud, [1435]
7. and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he went away, washed, and came back seeing. [1436]
8. The neighbours therefore, and those who saw that he was blind before, said, "Isn't this he who sat and begged?" [1437]
9. Others were saying, "It is he." Still others were saying, "He looks like him." He said, "I am." [1438]
10. They therefore were asking him, "How were your eyes opened?"
11. He answered, "A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went away and washed, and I received sight." [1439]
12. Then they asked him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."
13. They brought him who had been blind to the Pharisees.
14. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. [1440]

15. Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see."^[1441]
16. Some therefore of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" So there was division among them.^[1442]
17. Therefore they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."^[1443]
18. The Jews therefore didn't believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight,^[1444]
19. and asked them, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"
20. His parents answered them, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;
21. but how he now sees, we don't know; or who opened his eyes, we don't know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself."^[1445]
22. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if any man would confess him as Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.^[1446]
23. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age. Ask him."
24. So they called the man who was blind a second time, and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner."^[1447]
25. He therefore answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see."
26. They said to him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"
27. He answered them, "I told you already, and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't also want to become his disciples, do you?"^[1448]
28. They insulted him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.
29. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we don't know where he comes from."^[1449]
30. The man answered them, "How amazing! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.
31. We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God, and does his will, he listens to him.
32. Since the world began it has never been heard of that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind.
33. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."^[1450]
34. They answered him, "You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?" Then they threw him out.^[1451]
35. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man^[1452]?"

36. He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?"
37. Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him, and it is he who speaks with you."^[1453]
38. He said, "Lord, I believe!" and he paid him homage.^[1454]
39. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, that those who don't see may see; and that those who see may become blind."
40. Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?"^[1455]
41. Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

10: 1-18 - "I Am the Good Shepherd"

1. "Most certainly, I tell you, one who doesn't enter by the door into the sheep fold, but climbs up some other way, is a thief and a robber."^[1456]
2. But one who enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.^[1457]
3. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.
4. Whenever he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.^[1458]
5. They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him; for they don't know the voice of strangers."
6. Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they didn't understand what he was telling them.^[1459]
7. Jesus therefore said to them again, "Most certainly, I tell you, I am the sheep's door.
8. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them.
9. I am the door. If anyone enters in by me, he will be saved, and will go in and go out, and will find pasture. ^[1460]
10. The thief only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.^[1461]
11. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
12. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who doesn't own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees. The wolf snatches the sheep, and scatters them.
13. The hired hand flees because he is a hired hand, and doesn't care for the sheep.^[1462]
14. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and I'm known by my own;
15. even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep.^[1463]
16. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock

with one shepherd. ^[1464]

17. Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.

18. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. I received this commandment from my Father.”^[1465]

10: 19-21 - Division among the Jews Again

19. Therefore a division arose again among the Jews because of these words.

20. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane! Why do you listen to him?”

21. Others said, “These are not the sayings of one possessed by a demon. It isn’t possible for a demon to open the eyes of the blind, is it?”^[1466]

10: 22-39 - Jesus at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem

22. It was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem.^[1467]

23. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon’s porch.

24. The Jews therefore came around him and said to him, “How long will you hold us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”^[1468]

25. Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you don’t believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, these testify about me.”^[1469]

26. But you don’t believe, because you are not of my sheep.^[1470]

27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.^[1471]

28. I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.^[1472]

29. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand.

30. I and the Father are one.”^[1473]

31. Therefore the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?”

33. The Jews answered him, “We don’t stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself

God.”^[1474]

34. Jesus answered them, “Isn’t it written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods?’
35. If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can’t be broken),^[1475]
36. do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You blaspheme,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’^[1476]
37. If I don’t do the works of my Father, don’t believe me.
38. But if I do them, though you don’t believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”
39. They sought again to seize him, and he went out of their hand.^[1477]

10: 40-42 - Jesus Withdraws across the Jordan

40. He went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was baptising at first, and he stayed there.
41. Many came to him. They said, “John indeed did no sign, but everything that John said about this man is true.”
42. Many believed in him there.^[1478]

11: 1-44 - The Raising of Lazarus

1. Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister, Martha.^[1479]
2. It was that Mary who had anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother, Lazarus, was sick.^[1480]
3. The sisters therefore sent to him, saying, “Lord, behold, he for whom you have great affection is sick.”^[1481]
4. But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, that God’s Son may be glorified by it.”^[1482]
5. Now Jesus was loving^[1483] Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
6. When therefore he heard that he was sick, he stayed two days in the place where he was.^[1484]
7. Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let’s go into Judea again.”
8. The disciples asked him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you. Are you going there again?”

9. Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours of daylight? If a man walks in the day, he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world.
10. But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light isn't in him."^[1485]
11. He said these things, and after that, he said to them, "Our friend, Lazarus, has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awake him out of sleep."^[1486]
12. The disciples therefore said, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."^[1487]
13. Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he spoke of taking rest in sleep.
14. So Jesus said to them plainly then, "Lazarus is dead.
15. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. Nevertheless, let's go to him."^[1488]
16. Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go also, that we may die with him."
17. So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.^[1489]
18. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadiums^[1490] away.
19. Many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.
20. Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house.^[1491]
21. Therefore Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died."^[1492]
22. Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."
23. Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."
24. Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."^[1493]
25. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies.,
26. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"^[1494]
27. She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, he who comes into the world."
28. When she had said this, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here and is calling you."
29. When she heard this, she arose quickly and went to him.
30. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha met him.
31. Then the Jews who were with her in the house and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."
32. Therefore when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died."^[1495]
33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34. and said, "Where have you laid him?" They told him, "Lord, come and see."
35. Jesus wept.^[1496]
36. The Jews therefore said, "See how much affection he had for him!"
37. Some of them said, "Couldn't this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have also kept this man from dying?"^[1497]
38. Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.
39. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."
40. Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?"^[1498]
41. So they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank you that you listened to me.
42. I know that you always listen to me, but because of the multitude standing around I said this, that they may believe that you sent me."
43. When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"
44. He who was dead came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Free him, and let him go."^[1499]

11: 45-53 - Chief Priests and Pharisees Counsel against Jesus

45. Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.
46. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.^[1500]
47. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, "What are we doing? For this man does many signs.
48. If we leave him alone like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."^[1501]
49. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,
50. nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish."^[1502]
51. Now he didn't say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,^[1503]

52. and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.^[1504]
53. So from that day forward they took counsel that they might put him to death.

11: 54-57 - Jesus Retires to Ephraim

54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim. He stayed there with his disciples.^[1505]
55. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand. Many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.
56. Then they sought for Jesus and spoke with one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that he isn't coming to the feast at all?"
57. Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had commanded that if anyone knew where he was, he should report it, that they might seize him.^[1506]

12: 1-8 - The Woman with the Ointment

1. Then six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.^[1507]
2. So they made him a supper there. Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him.
3. Therefore Mary took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed Jesus's feet and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.
4. Then Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, one of his disciples, who would betray him, said,
5. "Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor?"
6. Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the money box, used to steal what was put into it.
7. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial.

8. For you always have the poor with you, but you don't always have me."^[1508]

12: 9-11 - The Plot against Lazarus

9. A large crowd therefore of the Jews learned that he was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10. But the chief priests conspired to put Lazarus to death also,

11. because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.^[1509]

12: 12-19 - The Triumphal Entry

12. On the next day a great multitude had come to the feast. When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,^[1510]

13. they took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet him, and cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!"^[1511]

14. Jesus, having found a young donkey, sat on it. As it is written,^[1512]

15. "Don't be afraid, daughter of Zion. Behold, your King comes, sitting on a donkey's colt."

16. His disciples didn't understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and that they had done these things to him.^[1513]

17. The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead was testifying about it.

18. For this cause also the multitude went and met him, because they heard that he had done this sign.

19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "See how you accomplish nothing. Behold, the world has gone after him."^[1514]

12: 20-26 - Conditions of Discipleship

- 20. Now there were certain Greeks^[1515] among those who went up to worship at the feast.^[1516]
- 21. These, therefore, came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Lord,^[1517] we want to see Jesus."
- 22. Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn, Andrew came with Philip, and they told Jesus.
- 23. Jesus answered them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."^[1518]
- 24. Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.^[1519]
- 25. He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life.
- 26. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him.^[1520]

12: 27-36 - God Glorifies Himself

- 27. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this time?' But for this cause I came to this time.
- 28. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came out of the sky, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
- 29. Therefore the multitude who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."
- 30. Jesus answered, "This voice hasn't come for my sake, but for your sakes."^[1521]
- 31. Now is the judgement of this world. Now the prince of this world will be cast out.^[1522]
- 32. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."
- 33. But he said this, signifying by what kind of death he should die.
- 34. The multitude answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ remains forever. How do you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up?' Who is this Son of Man?""
- 35. Jesus therefore said to them, "Yet a little while the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness doesn't overtake you. He who walks in the darkness doesn't know where he is going.
- 36. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light." Jesus said these things, and he departed and hid himself from them.^[1523]

12: 37-43 - The Reason for Speaking in Parables

- 37. But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they didn't believe in him,^[1524]
- 38. that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"^[1525]
- 39. For this cause they couldn't believe, for Isaiah said again,
- 40. "He has blinded their eyes and he hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and would turn,"
- 41. Isaiah said these things when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.
- 42. Nevertheless even many of the rulers believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they didn't confess it, so that they wouldn't be put out of the synagogue,^[1526]
- 43. for they loved men's praise more than God's praise.^[1527]

12: 44-50 - Judgement by the Word

- 44. Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent me."^[1528]
- 45. He who sees me sees him who sent me.^[1529]
- 46. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in the darkness.
- 47. If anyone listens to my sayings, and doesn't believe, I don't judge him. For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ^[1530]
- 48. He who rejects me, and doesn't receive my sayings, has one who judges him. The word that I spoke will judge him in the last day. ^[1531]
- 49. For I spoke not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.
- 50. I know that his commandment is eternal life. The things therefore which I speak, even as the Father has said to me, so I speak."^[1532]

13: 1-20 - Washing the Disciples' Feet

1. Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his time had come that he would depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.^[1533]
2. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,^[1534]
3. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and was going to God,
4. arose from supper, and laid aside his outer garments. He took a towel and wrapped a towel around his waist.
5. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.^[1535]
6. Then he came to Simon Peter. He said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"
7. Jesus answered him, "You don't know what I am doing now, but you will understand later."^[1536]
8. Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."
9. Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"^[1537]
10. Jesus said to him, "Someone who has bathed only needs to have his feet washed, but is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you."^[1538]
11. For he knew him who would betray him, therefore he said, "You are not all clean."
12. So when he had washed their feet, put his outer garment back on, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"
13. You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You say so correctly, for so I am.
14. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
15. For I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you. ^[1539]
16. Most certainly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his lord, neither is one who is sent greater than he who sent him.
17. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
18. I don't speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen. But that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.'^[1540]
19. From now on, I tell you before it happens, that when it happens, you may believe that I am he.^[1541]
20. Most certainly I tell you, he who receives whomever I send, receives me; and he who receives me, receives him who sent me."^[1542]

13: 21-30 - Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

21. When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, "Most certainly I tell you that one of you will betray me."^[1543]
22. The disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom he spoke.
23. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was at the table, leaning against Jesus' breast.^[1544]
24. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaks."
25. He, leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast, asked him, "Lord, who is it?"
26. Jesus therefore answered, "It is he to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.
27. After the piece of bread, then Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."
28. Now nobody at the table knew why he said this to him
29. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus said to him, "Buy what things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.^[1545]
30. Therefore having received that morsel, he went out immediately. It was night.^[1546]

13: 31-35 - The New Commandment of Love

31. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.
32. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him immediately.^[1547]
33. Little children, I will be with you a little while longer. You will seek me, and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you can't come,' so now I tell you.
34. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.
35. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

13: 36-38 - Peter's Denial Predicted

36. Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you can't follow now, but you will follow afterwards."
37. Peter said to him, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."
38. Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for me? Most certainly I tell you, the rooster won't crow until you have denied me three times.^[1548]

14: 1-14 - "Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled"

1. "Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.
2. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it weren't so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you..
3. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also.^[1549]
4. You know where I go, and you know the way."
5. Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"^[1550]
6. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.^[1551]
7. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know him, and have seen him."^[1552]
8. Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us."^[1553]
9. Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you such a long time, and do you not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How do you say, 'Show us the Father?' ^[1554]
10. Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I tell you, I speak not from myself; but the Father who lives in me does his works.
11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.^[1555]
12. Most certainly I tell you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also; and he will do greater works than these, because I am going to my Father.^[1556]
13. Whatever you will ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it.^[1557]

14: 15-31 - The Promise of the Paraclete – Part 1

15. If you love me, keep my commandments.
16. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter^[1558] that he may be with you forever;
17. the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him and doesn't know him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you.
18. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.^[1559]
19. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more; but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also.^[1560]
20. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.^[1561]
21. One who has my commandments and keeps them, that person is one who loves me. One who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him."^[1562]
22. Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, what has happened that you are about to reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?"^[1563]
23. Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him.
24. He who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words. The word which you hear isn't mine, but the Father's who sent me.^[1564]
25. I have said these things to you while still living with you.
26. But the Comforter the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you.^[1565]
27. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, I give to you. Don't let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.
28. You heard how I told you, 'I go away, and I come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I said 'I am going to my Father;' for the Father is greater than I.^[1566]
29. Now I have told you before it happens so that when it happens, you may believe.
30. I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world comes, and he has nothing in me.^[1567]
31. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father commanded me, even so I do. Arise, let's go from here.^[1568]

15: 1-8 - Jesus the True Vine

1. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer.^[1569]
2. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
3. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ^[1570]
4. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me.
5. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
6. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
7. If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.
8. "In this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be my disciples.^[1571]

15: 9-17 - "Abide in My Love"

9. Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love.^[1572]
10. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love.
11. I have spoken these things to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full.
12. This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. ^[1573]
13. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.^[1574]
14. You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you.
15. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant doesn't know what his lord does. But I have called you friends, for everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you.
16. You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you will ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
17. I command these things to you, that you may love one another."^[1575]

15: 18-25 - The World's Hatred

18. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you.
19. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.^[1576]
20. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his lord.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.
21. But they will do all these things to you for my name's sake, because they don't know him who sent me.^[1577]
22. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.^[1578]
23. He who hates me, hates my Father also.
24. If I hadn't done among them the works which no one else did, they wouldn't have had sin. But now they have seen and also hated both me and my Father.
25. But this happened so that the word may be fulfilled which was written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'^[1579]

15: 26-27 - The Promise of the Paraclete – Part 2

26. has come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me.^[1580]
27. You will also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

16: 1-4 - The Fate of the Disciples

1. "I have said these things to you so that you wouldn't be caused to stumble.
2. They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time comes that whoever kills you will think that he offers service to God.
3. They will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.
4. But I have told you these things, so that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you about them. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.^[1581]

16: 5-15 - The Promise of the Paraclete – Part 3

5. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'^[1582]
6. But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your heart.
7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go away, the Comforter won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.^[1583]
8. When he has come, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgement;
9. about sin, because they don't believe in me;
10. about righteousness, because I am going to my Father, and you won't see me anymore;
11. about judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged.
12. I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now.
13. However when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak from himself; but whatever he hears, he will speak. He will declare to you things that are coming.
14. He will glorify me, for he will take from what is mine, and will declare it to you.
15. All things that the Father has are mine; therefore I said that he takes of mine and will declare it to you.^[1584]

16: 16-22 - Sorrow Turned to Joy

16. A little while, and you will not see me. Again a little while, and you will see me."^[1585]
17. Some of his disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you won't see me, and again a little while, and you will see me;' and, 'Because I go to the Father'?"
18. They said therefore, "What is this that he says, 'A little while'? We don't know what he is saying."^[1586]
19. Therefore Jesus perceived that they wanted to ask him, and he said to them, "Do you inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, 'A little while, and you won't see me, and again a little while, and you will see me?'"
20. Most certainly I tell you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.
21. A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her time has come. But when she has delivered the child, she doesn't remember the anguish any more, for the joy that a human being is born into the world.

22. Therefore you now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.^[1587]

16: 23-28 - Prayer in the Name of Jesus

23. "In that day you will ask me no questions. Most certainly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.
24. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.
25. I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. But the time is coming when I will no more speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father.^[1588]
26. In that day you will ask in my name; and I don't say to you that I will pray to the Father for you,
27. for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God.
28. I came from the Father, and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

16: 29-33 - Prediction of the Disciples' Flight

29. His disciples said to him, "Behold, now you are speaking plainly, and using no figures of speech.
30. Now we know that you know all things, and don't need for anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God."^[1589]
31. Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?
32. Behold, the time is coming, yes, and has now come, that you will be scattered, everyone to his own place, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
33. I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble; but cheer up! I have overcome the world."^[1590]

17: 1-26 - The Intercessory Prayer

1. Jesus said these things, then lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may also glorify you;
2. even as you gave him authority over all flesh, so he will give eternal life to all whom you have given him.
3. This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.
4. I glorified you on the earth. I have accomplished the work which you have given me to do.^[1591]
5. Now, Father, glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world existed.^[1592]
6. I revealed your name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word.
7. Now they have known that all things whatever you have given me are from you,
8. for the words which you have given me I have given to them, and they received them, and knew for sure that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me.^[1593]
9. I pray for them. I don't pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.^[1594]
10. All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.
11. I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.
12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. I have kept those whom you have given me. None of them is lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.^[1595]
13. But now I come to you, and I say these things in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves.
14. I have given them your word. The world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
15. I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one.
16. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.
17. Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth
18. As you sent me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world.
19. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
20. Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who will believe in me through their word,
21. that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me.^[1596]
22. The glory which you have given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, even as we are one;
23. I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that you sent me and loved them,

even as you loved me.

24. Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world.
25. Righteous Father, the world hasn't known you, but I knew you; and these knew that you sent me.
26. I made known to them your name, and will make it known; that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them."^[1597]

18: 1-12 - Gethsemane and Jesus' Arrest

1. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered.^[1598]
2. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.
3. Judas then, having taken a detachment of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.^[1599]
4. Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were happening to him, went out, and said to them, "Who are you looking for?"
5. They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.
6. When therefore he said to them, "I am he," they went backward, and fell to the ground.^[1600]
7. Again therefore he asked them, "Who are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth."
8. Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way,"
9. that the word might be fulfilled which he spoke, "Of those whom you have given me, I have lost none."^[1601]
10. Simon Peter therefore, having a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
11. Jesus therefore said to Peter, "Put the sword into its sheath. The cup which the Father has given me, shall I not surely drink it?"^[1602]
12. So the detachment, the commanding officer, and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him,

18: 13-27 - Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Peter's Denial)

13. and led him to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.^[1603]
14. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should perish for the people.
15. Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest;^[1604]
16. but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought in Peter.
17. Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, "You're not one of this man's disciples are you?"^[1605] He said: "I am not."^[1606]
18. Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals, for it was cold. They were warming themselves. Peter was with them, standing and warming himself.
19. The high priest therefore asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.
20. Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where the Jews always meet. I said nothing in secret.
21. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. Behold, they know the things which I said."^[1607]
22. When he had said this, one of the officers standing by slapped Jesus with his hand, saying, "Do you answer the high priest like that?"
23. Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, testify of the evil; but if well, why do you beat me?"^[1608]
24. Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.
25. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him, "You're not one of his disciples are you?"^[1609] He denied it and said: "I am not."
26. One of the servants of the high priest, being a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"^[1610]
27. Peter therefore denied it again, and immediately the rooster crowed.^[1611]

18: 28-38 - The Trial before Pilate

28. Therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium. It was early, and they themselves didn't enter into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.^[1612]
29. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"^[1613]

30. They answered him, "If this man weren't an evildoer, we wouldn't have delivered him up to you."
31. Pilate therefore said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is illegal for us to put anyone to death,"^[1614]
32. that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying by what kind of death he should die.^[1615]
33. Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"^[1616]
34. Jesus answered him, "Do you say this by yourself, or did others tell you about me?"^[1617]
35. Pilate answered, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me. What have you done?"^[1618]
36. Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, that I wouldn't be delivered to the Jews. But now my Kingdom is not from here."^[1619]
37. Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I have been born, and for this reason I have come into the world, that I should testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."
38. Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" When he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no basis for a charge against him."^[1620]

18: 39-40 - Jesus or Barabbas

39. But you have a custom, that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Therefore, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"
40. Then they all shouted again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.^[1621]

19: 1-6 - "Behold the Man!"

1. So Pilate then took Jesus, and flogged him.^[1622]
2. The soldiers twisted thorns into a crown, and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple garment.^[1623]
3. They kept saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they kept slapping him.
4. Then Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I bring him out to you, that you may know that I find no basis for a charge

against him."

5. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the man!"^[1624]
6. When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, saying, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him."^[1625]

19: 7-15 - The Trial before Pilate – 2

7. The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."^[1626]
8. When therefore Pilate heard this saying, he was more afraid.^[1627]
9. He entered into the Praetorium again, and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer^[1628]
10. Pilate therefore said to him, "Aren't you speaking to me? Don't you know that I have power to release you and have power to crucify you?"^[1629]
11. Jesus answered, "You would have no power at all against me, unless it were given to you from above. Therefore he who delivered me to you has greater sin."^[1630]
12. At this, Pilate was seeking to release him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you release this man, you aren't Caesar's friend! Everyone who makes himself a king speaks against Caesar!"^[1631]
13. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgement seat at a place called "The Pavement", but in Hebrew, "Gabbatha".
14. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, at about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"
15. They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"^[1632]

19: 16-27 - The Crucifixion

16. So then he delivered him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led him away.
17. He went out, bearing his cross, to the place called "The Place of a Skull", which is called in Hebrew, "Golgotha",^[1633]
18. where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the middle.

19. Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. There was written, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."
20. Therefore many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.
21. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'he said, "I am King of the Jews.'""
22. Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."^[1634]
23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.
24. Then they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "They parted my garments among them. For my cloak they cast lots."^[1635]
25. But standing by Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.^[1636]
26. Therefore when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"
27. Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour, the disciple took her to his own home.^[1637]

19: 28-30 - The 'Death' of Jesus

28. After this, Jesus, seeing that all things were now finished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I am thirsty."^[1638]
29. Now a vessel full of vinegar was set there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop, and held it at his mouth.
30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.^[1639]

19: 31-37 - Jesus' Side Pierced

31. Therefore the Jews, because it was the Preparation Day, so that the bodies wouldn't remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special one), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.^[1640]
32. Therefore the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with him;^[1641]
33. but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they didn't break his legs.

34. However one of the soldiers pricked^[1642] his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.^[1643]
35. He who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, that you may believe.^[1644]
36. For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "A bone of him will not be broken."^[1645]
37. Again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they pierced."^[1646]

19: 38-42 - The Burial of Jesus

38. After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission. He came therefore and took away his body.
39. Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred Roman pounds.
40. So they took Jesus' body, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.^[1647]
41. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb in which no man had ever yet been laid.
42. Then because of the Jews' Preparation Day (for the tomb was near at hand) they laid Jesus there.

20: 1-13 - The Women at the Tomb

1. Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went early, while it was still dark, to the tomb, and saw the stone taken away from the tomb.^[1648]
2. Therefore she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have laid him!"^[1649]
3. Therefore Peter and the other disciple went out, and they went toward the tomb.
4. They both ran together. The other disciple outran Peter, and came to the tomb first.
5. Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying, yet he didn't enter in.
6. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying,
7. and the cloth that had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.^[1650]

8. So then the other disciple who came first to the tomb also entered in, and he saw and believed.
9. For as yet they didn't know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.^[1651]
10. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.^[1652]
11. But Mary was standing outside at the tomb weeping. So as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb,
12. and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13. They asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him."^[1653]

20: 14-18 - Jesus Appears to the Women

14. When she said these things she turned around, and she sees Jesus standing, but she had not known that it is Jesus.
15. Jesus said to her: "Woman, why do you weep? Who do you seek?" Thinking him to be a gardener, she said to him: "Lord,^[1654] if you carried him away, tell me where you placed him, and I will take him away."^[1655]
16. Jesus said to her: "Mary." When she turned to him she said to him in Hebrew: "Rabboni!" which is to say Teacher.
17. Jesus said to her: "Do not touch me, for not yet have I ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, I ascend to my Father and your Father and my God and your God."^[1656]
18. Mary Magdalene goes and announces to the disciples: "I have seen the lord." And the things he spoke to her.

20: 19-23 - Jesus Appears to Disciples (Thomas Being Absent)

19. When
therefore it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the middle, and said to them, "Peace be to you."^[1657]
20. When he
had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.^[1658]
21. Jesus
therefore said to them again, "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."^[1659]

22. When he
had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit!"^[1660]
23. If you
forgive anyone's sins, they have been forgiven them. If you retain anyone's sins, they have been retained."^[1661]

20: 24-29 - Jesus Appears to Disciples (Thomas Present)

24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus^[1662], wasn't with them when Jesus came.
25. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."^[1663]
26. After eight days again his disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the middle, and said, "Peace be to you."^[1664]
27. Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but believing."^[1665]
28. Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"^[1666]
29. Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed."^[1667]

20: 30-31 - The End of John

30. Therefore Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book;
31. but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.^[1668]

21: 1-19 - John's Epilogue

1. After these things, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself this way.^[1669]
2. Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.^[1670]
3. Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They told him, "We are also coming with you." They immediately went out, and entered into the boat. That night, they caught nothing.^[1671]
4. But when day had already come, Jesus stood on the beach, yet the disciples didn't know that it was Jesus.^[1672]
5. Jesus therefore said to them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered him, "No."^[1673]
6. He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." They cast it therefore, and now they weren't able to draw it in for the multitude of fish.
7. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved^[1674] said to Peter: "It's the lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he wrapped his coat around himself (for he was in his under garments,^[1675] and he threw himself in the sea.
8. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away), dragging the net full of fish.
9. So when they got out on the land, they saw a fire of coals there, with fish and bread laid on it.^[1676]
10. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."^[1677]
11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of one hundred fifty-three great fish. Even though there were so many, the net wasn't torn.^[1678]
12. Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast!" None of the disciples dared inquire of him, "Who are you?" knowing that it was the Lord.^[1679]
13. Then Jesus came and took the bread, gave it to them, and the fish likewise.
14. This is now the third time that Jesus was revealed to his disciples after he had risen from the dead.^[1680]
15. So when they had eaten their breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."
16. He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."
17. He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."^[1681]
18. Most certainly I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted to. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you don't want to go."

19. Now he said this, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. When he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."^[1682]

21: 20-25 - The End of John – Part 2

20. Then Peter, turning around, saw a disciple following. This was the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who had also leaned on Jesus' breast at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray you?"
21. Peter seeing him, said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"
22. Jesus said to him, "If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you? You follow me."
23. This saying therefore went out among the brothers, that this disciple wouldn't die. Yet Jesus didn't say to him that he wouldn't die, but, "If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you?"^[1683]
24. This is the disciple who testifies about these things, and wrote these things. We know that his witness is true.^[1684]
25. There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they would all be written, I suppose that even the world itself wouldn't have room for the books that would be written.^[1685]

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Important Words

εὐαγγελίου (*euangelion*) – Noun, genitive, singular, neuter of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*) meaning: *good news, God message of salvation, gospel*. (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the above as *good news* which is correct; however, I prefer to keep the word **gospel** for the benefit of the readers, which is also in line with other translations such as the RSV.

The word ‘gospel’ has been used in the Holy Quran as well, and is spoken on as being given to Jesus:

“And We sent in their footsteps Jesus son of Mary, confirming what came before him in the Torah, and We gave him the *Gospel*, in which was guidance and light, confirming what came before him in the Torah, and a guidance and admonition for the pious” (Holy Quran, 5:47)

God gave Jesus the **gospel**, this does not mean, that the gospel given to Jesus were the documents which are being commented on in this book, as it would make little sense in saying that God gave Jesus the works of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In Arabic, the word used is انجيل (*Injeel*) and is probably derived from the Greek word used in the verse above and means the same thing. In the Quranic verse above, the Injeel are the revelations of Jesus, God’s message to him. It is evident in the verse being commented on above, that Jesus is telling people to believe in his revelations, that he is a prophet of God, sent to guide the people back to the true teachings of the Torah.

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the 2nd Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community said:

“The word Injeel means ‘good news’ and the Gospels are so called because they contained not only ‘good news’ for those who accepted Jesus, but also because they contained prophecies about the advent of the Greatest of the prophets ... They also contain prophecies about the advent in the Latter Days of Jesus’ own counterpart, the Promised Messiah” (*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.363)

[41] Textual Variant

The last four words (**the Son of God**) in the above verse are *additions* to the gospel. Many, if not all Christians approximately 100 years ago believed that there were no changes made to the Bible, however that stance has changed somewhat due to the discovery of early New Testament manuscripts so the majority of Christians these days accept that certain additions and edits were made by Christian scribes to the original biblical manuscripts.

The above is one example. The final four words are a forgery, in that they were not written by the original author, but were rather added to the verse hundreds of years later.

How do we know this? Scholars utilise what is called Textual Criticism, the last four words are present in some of the early Bible manuscripts, e.g. the Received Text (see Introduction to Bible Manuscripts for details of what the Received Text is), Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae. However, earlier Bible manuscripts *do not* record these words, such as the famous manuscript Codex Sinaiticus. This verse was also inscribed on an amulet dated to the third century CE, known as P.Oxy.5073 and the last four words were not included (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.178).

Since there are two manuscripts which contain the last four words and just one omitting it, one may argue that the three words are authentic. Yet, scholars have argued on the basis of the *intentions* of Christian scribes who would make new copies of Bibles from older manuscripts: If the original Gospel of Mark contained the words *Son of God*, why would a Christian scribe remove it? There should be no reason for him to do so, on the contrary he would want to re-enforce the position that Jesus was the son of God: which in turn leads scholars to argue that the phrase was not originally there, but was added later on. This makes more sense than a scribe deleting the phrase later. See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Establishing the Text: Mark 1:1* in Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm, eds, *Texts and Contexts: The Function of Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts*, 1995, p.111-27. Bart Ehrman also makes the case in *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christology Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, 1993, p.73-75.

A number of scholars, particularly Christian ones, have argued that because Mark ends his story with the Centurion's proclamation that Jesus is the son of God (15:39), Mark would have begun his gospel with the same statement. But this is a weak argument as the opening bracket of 15:39 is not Mark 1:1, but Mark 1:11. Again see Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christology Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, 1993, p.74.

Important Words

Ἰησοῦ (*Iesou*) – Noun, genitive singular, masculine of Ἰησοῦς (*Iesous*) meaning: *Lord (Yahweh) saves* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Jesus is the English translation of the Greek Ἰησοῦς, which in turn comes from the Hebrew יֵשׁוּעַ (Yeshua) meaning: *deliverance; rescue; salvation i.e. primarily physical rescue by God. It also means victory* (The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs).

χριστοῦ (*Christou*) - Noun, genitive singular, masculine of χριστός (*Christos*) meaning: *to be rubbed on; used as ointment or salve. Of persons anointed, especially kings of Israel, also of the patriarchs. The Messiah* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott Greek-English Lexicon).

Christ, an English translation of Christos comes from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (*Mashiah*) which means: *anointed by divine command; high priest of Israel; Messianic prince* (The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs).

The Arabic مسيح (*Masih*) has the same meaning: *anointed; wiped over with such a thing as oil; a king*. It also means *to journey through a land* (Lane).

Commentary

Jesus, the name has two predominant meanings: the active *saviour, one who saves*; or the passive *one who is saved, by God*. Contrary to what many people think, **Christ** was not the surname of Jesus; Jesus Christ, son of Mary and Joseph Christ. Christ was/is more of a title; it is simply the English for the Hebrew *Messiah* or *Mashiah*. Thus Jesus Christ could be translated as Jesus the Messiah, or Jesus the anointed one.

Some Christians say that Jesus was the *saviour*, he saved us from our sins and damnation and we need him. "Even his name means Saviour!" people will say. However, that's only

looking at his name from one angle; the other and equally valid one is that Jesus' name meant *he was saved*. And this is exactly what happened; Jesus was saved from an accursed death by God.

The word **Messiah** has been used many times in the Old Testament: Aaron was anointed (Lev 8:12); as were Priests (Numbers 3:3), Saul (1 Samuel 10:1), Solomon (1 King 1:39) and David (II Samuel 12:7). Yet, none of these figures are referred to as 'Messiahs'; the word in the above context in the Gospel of Mark refers to a person who holds the specific title of Messiah. This title was held by Jesus, being distinct from the above mentioned prophets in the sense that he was anointed by God as opposed to being anointed by humans as in the case of the previous prophets and kings.

It may be worthwhile for the reader's sake to discuss the concept of the Messiah in the Old Testament first; I won't go into too much detail, for that the reader should read *The One Who Is to Come* (2007) by Joseph Fitzmyer.

Some Christians will state that much of the Old Testament points to the coming of Jesus, or that the purpose of the Old Testament was to lead people to the belief that Jesus, the son of God was to come to save them from their sins. Is this really the case? The Torah makes no mention of a Messiah, or any future person who is to come and save humanity from their sins. Not only is this idea or concept absent in the Torah, but it is also absent in the first dozen or so books in the Old Testament.

The actual term or title *Messiah*, referring to an awaited saviour figure is *not mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament*. However, prophecies do speak of a future king to come, mainly modelled on the prophet king David, who would return and redeem or save Israel from its enemies.

In 587 BCE, the King of Babylon invaded the southern kingdom of Israel and exiled the majority of its inhabitants. After this, the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the elders of the exiles, giving them hope by prophesying the return and the rule of David their king (Jer 29:10, 30:8-9). Yet the king was *not* called a Messiah; the concept of the coming Messiah did not come about by this time. A little later in the book of Ezekiel, the future David is again prophesied, but again not referred to as Messiah (Ezek 34:24, 37:24), likewise in the Psalms, particularly Psalms 2, 110 and 132. But again, the term Messiah is not used. In the poems of Isaiah, numerous prophecies exist regarding the coming of a special man from God, but as before, never is the term Messiah used for such a figure. The only reference of a Messiah in the poems of Isaiah is the title given to Cyrus the Persian emperor! (45:1)

The concept of an awaited saviour/king/Messiah died down somewhat during Persian and Ptolemaic rule (around the 3rd and 4th century BCE), since in those days the Jews were given freedom to practise their religion. No one was thinking they needed saving, so no one bothered to write much about it. However, once this freedom was threatened and persecution began, primarily under the rule of King Antiochus IV in 169 BCE, the Messianic prophecies once again resurfaced, some with explicit reference to the Messiah.

At the time of Jesus, the Jewish people had a very different concept of the Messiah, including his role and characteristics: On one extreme, you had beliefs which spoke of a *heavenly* Messiah, modelled on the *son of man* figure in the Book of Daniel (see under [Mark 2:10](#) for a detailed discussion on this). This view is seen in *The Parables of Enoch*, a document which is dated to be between 105-64 BCE (J.H Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol 1*, 2009, p.7); and *IV Ezra*, another work written much later, just after the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. In both of these Jewish writings, the authors use the text of the book of Daniel and speak of an angelic type of Messiah with supernatural abilities coming at the end of days, judging the sinners and destroying his enemies; he would not fight via military means but rather with his supernatural abilities, such as fiery breath which would consume his enemies. He would also transform heaven and earth to new ones where all would live in peace and harmony.

The more commonly held view was the idea that the Messiah would be an earthly king, modelled on prophet David; not only would he be like David, but also his direct

descendant (hence the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke speak of his supposed direct ancestry to prophet David). This kingly Messiah would wage war against oppressors of the earth; mainly the enemies of Israel, judging them, driving out sinners and would destroy entire nations with the word of his mouth (often interpreted as wisdom). He would be a king and purge Jerusalem as well. Works containing such views are more numerous: *Psalms of Solomon* (end of 1st century CE); *Dead Sea Scrolls* and *2 (Syriac Apocalypse) of Baruch* (post 70 CE); *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (250 BCE); and *Sibylline Oracles* (first or second century BCE).

Over time, the number of documents sharing the concept of an earthly Messiah exceeded that of the heavenly Messiah, and the Jewish expectation of the Messiah even in the gospels, was a kingly Messiah, modelled on the prophet David; not a heavenly one with supernatural abilities as depicted in the Parables of Enoch and IV Ezra.

[42]

Textual Variant

While the majority of ancient manuscripts read as above, some manuscripts (Codex Alexandrinus) have the text reading as: 'As it is written in the *prophets*.' The Christian scribe who was writing it picked up on an error (explained below) and sought to rectify it by replacing *Isaiah* with *the Prophets* (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.178). He was basically correcting the words of the author Mark.

[43]

The Gospel of Mark begins with the introduction of the prophet John the Baptist. It starts with a quotation from the book of Isaiah, but in fact it is a combination of Mal 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 taken from the Greek Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament which was translated from the Hebrew version between the third century BCE and first century BCE.

[44] Important Words

βαπτίζων (*Baptizōn*) – Verb, present active participle, nominative singular, masculine of βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) meaning: *strictly dip; immerse in water; wash* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

Commentary

The ritual of **baptism** is based on the commandments laid out in the book of Leviticus in the Torah. Those who are ritually unclean by certain actions must bathe their bodies to become clean again. Various actions rendered a person unclean, including sexual activity between husband and wife and touching something else which is unclean, like a corpse. The baptism performed by John, i.e. dipping people in the river for the remission of their sins echoes what God says to Ezekiel: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ex 36:25). This highlights some sort of cleaning of idolatry and non-Jewish customs, which in turn could have been the objective of John's baptism: to cleanse the people of their sins, lead them to God and bring about a new type of re-birth.

A similar tradition exists within Islam; the Ablution or *Wuhu* in Arabic. This is washing of parts of the body in preparation of to the performance of prayers.

[45] **John the Baptist** is introduced here: he is described in similar terms to the Old Testament prophet Elijah, for Elijah was a hairy man and wore a leather belt around his waist (II Kings 1:8). The Jews believed Elijah to have ascended to Heaven (II Kings 2:11) and that he would descend from heaven before the coming of the Lord (Mal 4:5). For more details, see notes under [Mark 9:11-13](#).

Regarding John the Baptist himself; he was an ascetic Jewish prophet, who according to the first three gospels was active just before the coming of Jesus. His main task was to preach repentance and make the people ready for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Some scholars believe that John the Baptist was amongst the Jewish sect called the Essenes, who were the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He then left and began openly preaching to the Jews later in his life. This might be a little far-fetched; people in the past

would sometimes spent time with different communities to learn about them, e.g. Josephus also speaks about spending time with the Essenes (Life 2:10-11) in his youth. John may have done the same.

The Arabic name for John is *Yahya*, who is spoken of in the Holy Quran as being a prophet, the son of Prophet Zechariah, he was an answer to the latter's prayers for a righteous offspring (2:39-41). See Luke 1:5-25 for a more detailed overview of the birth of John the Baptist in both the gospels and Holy Quran.

According to the above text, **all in the country of Judea came to him** implies that John the Baptist was generally accepted as a Prophet by his people. The people came to **confess** their sins: this did not mean they came and confessed sins openly. Rather, it may have been communal confessions, like the one done on the Day of Atonement as recorded in the Torah (Lev 16:21).

The concept of confessions was widespread amongst the pagans and Gentiles. The Egyptians had confessions written down on stone tablets, often read out in public as a warning and example to others (Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions*, 1954, p.55-67). Reports also exist in Roman and Greek writings of the practice of public confessions in order to humiliate themselves among the worshippers of the pagan god Isis (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.142).

[46] Here John is described as Jesus' precursor and prophesies his coming. Often a Prophet would indicate or prophesy the coming of the next one, and this seems to have been the case with John, who indicates that the Messiah is about to come and who will hold a much **mightier** position than himself.

[47] Important Words

The **Holy Spirit** πνεῦμα το ἁγίου (*pneuma to agion*) is different from the Old Testament *Spirit of the Lord* רוח יהוה (*ruwach Yahweh*). According to most Christians, this was the third person of the Trinity; the Holy Ghost as many put it. What exactly is the function of the Holy Spirit is not completely clear, it seems to strengthen people like John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) and Mary (Luke 1:35). Later in Mark 13:11 the Holy Spirit is spoken of as strengthening the disciples, enabling them or speaking through them when they get into trouble (13:11).

It's easier to interpret and understand the Holy Spirit as simply a force or power of God as opposed to some other divine being or person which isn't made explicit in the Bible. The Spirit of Holiness is mentioned in the Holy Quran and Islamic traditions as well, which lends support to the above interpretation:

"And indeed We gave Moses the Book and We followed him up with Messengers, after him, and We gave Jesus son of Mary clear signs and strengthened him with the روح ال قدس (Spirit of holiness) ..." (2:88)

روح ال قدس (*ruh al Qudas*) is a compound word made up of روح and قدس. The first word روح (*ruh*) means, *a spirit, an angel, a word of God*. The second word قدس (*Qudas*) means, *sanctity, holiness*. (Lane) So the combined word روح ال قدس would mean, *the Holy of blessed Word of God, the Spirit of angel of Holiness*.

The Spirit of Holiness wasn't the exclusive privilege of Prophet John or Jesus alone, but was vouchsafed to all prophets as the following verse indicates:

"Say, روح ال قدس (Spirit of Holiness) has brought it (the Quran) down gradually from your Lord with truth, to strengthen those who believe and as a guidance and good news to the Muslims." (16:103)

It is also commonly believed the Spirit of Holiness is another name for the angel Gabriel (Ibn Kathir). The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is recorded to have used the term too. It has been narrated by Hassan bin Thabit Al-Ansari: "I asked Abu Huraira "By Allah! Tell me the truth whether you heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, 'O Hassan! Reply on behalf of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). O Allah! Help him with the Holy Spirit.'" Abu Huraira said, "Yes . " (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 8, Number 444, made available on www.sunnah.com).

Finally, the term is also present in other Jewish works written around the time of Jesus himself. It is recorded in the Dead Sea Scrolls: 'He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness uniting him to the truth.' (1QS, III:5).

Therefore, both in Islamic and Jewish texts, the Holy Spirit is seen as either an angel or simply as a reference to a power of God, not part of God Himself. The Trinity is not even mentioned in the Bible. Nor is there anything explicit in the Bible to indicate that there exists a trinity, or that God has 'three persons' as many modern Christian preachers put it.

However, it's worth mentioning that there is in fact one explicit reference in the first letter of John of the Trinity, in 5:7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Yet, this is acknowledged to be a forgery, an insertion made into the letter by a later Christian scribe, since it is not present in any ancient Greek manuscripts (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.397).

Commentary

John apparently continues with his statement and prophecy of the Messiah. However, there is a slight problem with the above verse; John makes mention of the **Holy Spirit**, but according to the book of Acts, in 19:2 the disciples of John encounter Paul and confess that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Therefore if John the Baptist did speak of the Holy Spirit, his own disciples didn't hear him or should have paid more attention to their master.

Furthermore, the statement that John baptises with water and Jesus with the Holy Spirit makes little sense in Jewish thought; for the two are inseparable. In the Old Testament, the two go hand in hand:

"I will sprinkle clean *water* upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a *new spirit* I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:25-26).

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to *cleanse* them from sin and uncleanness. And on that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the *unclean spirit*" (Zech 13:1-2).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls (these were ancient manuscripts discovered in the last 60 or so years, authored by the Jewish sect known as the Essenes), a similar concept exists: "God will... cleanse man through a Holy Spirit, and will sprinkle upon him a spirit of truth as *purifying water*..."

It may be that the separation of water and spirit in baptism was a Christian invention, and most likely to distinguish the roles of John and Jesus, making the former inferior to the latter, and elevating the position of Jesus himself.

[48] Jesus is finally introduced; he is an ordinary Jew coming to be baptised along with all the other Jews. The fact that Jesus is being baptised shouldn't cause any alarm, as

stated in verse 5, *all* of Judea came to be baptised by John. But since the Messiah *did* hold a superior position to that of John, Jesus must have not yet been informed that he was the Messiah.

[49] While being baptised, or at least when coming out of the water, the **heavens parted** and the **Spirit (Holy Spirit) descends** from heaven upon Jesus. It has been argued by some scholars, that the imagery of a *dove* descending from heaven has been modelled from the stories of the Greek writer Homer, in his depiction of the descents of gods from heaven to earth. In these stories, Homer often describes the descents like that of birds (Edward Dixon, *Descending Spirit and Descending Gods: An Interpretation of the Spirit's Descent as a Dove in Mark 1:10*).

The descent of the Spirit would most likely imply the endowment or gift of some sort of leadership; see for example Judges 3:10 and 1 Samuel 16:13. Or the spirit could have been the angel Gabriel who descended to elevate the position of Jesus, or delivered a message to him. The next verse shows what the message is.

[50] As explained above, the Spirit of Gabriel descended on Jesus and delivered to him the message in this verse. Our author Mark probably had in mind Psalms 2:7 when he wrote **You are my son**. The Psalm has often been interpreted to be a royal psalm, where it refers to the coming of the future Davidic King of Israel or Messiah to come and redeem Israel. In verse 7 of the Psalm, Yahweh/God announces to the king that he is *His son*, which should not be understood as the literal son or that the future Davidic King would be a divine being as believed by many Christians, for such a view would be blasphemy amongst the Jews.

The title *son of God* was never interpreted to be a divine title among the Jews living before and during the time of Jesus, but was an honorific title, illustrating the close relationship between the man with God (see notes under [Mark 3:11](#) for a thorough analysis of the title and how it was never meant to show divinity). This is the same when the future King/Messiah would be referred to as the son of God. Since the Psalm is considered to be a Messianic psalm, the declaration of God would indicate that God had informed Jesus that he was the Messiah at the time of his baptism.

[51] After the baptism the Spirit seems to take Jesus **immediately** away into the **wilderness**. This seems to be the only purpose of the Spirit according to our author Mark (The Spirit doesn't do much else in the rest of the gospel). Here, the Spirit whisks Jesus off from the Jordan river to the **wilderness**, without any explanation. Jesus then stays in the wilderness for forty days with wild animals, Angels and Satan. The Gospel of Matthew records more about this event in [4:1-11](#), as does the gospel of Luke in [4:1-13](#).

It may simply be that Jesus received further revelations which either indicated that he should go into seclusion to pray more or that he himself felt he should do so. The practice of seclusion is encouraged in Islam as well; the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had the habit of retreating to Mount Hira before receiving his Divine mission. He continued the practice of seclusion in the last ten days of Ramadan as well.

There is also a slight problem with the above account (accounts when we add Matthew and Luke), or the problem may lie with the Gospel of John: According to the Synoptic gospels (first three gospels; Matthew, Mark and Luke), after the baptism of Jesus, the latter is whisked away into the wilderness where he remained in seclusion for **forty days** (next verse below). However, there is no visit to the wilderness in John's Gospel, rather the *very next day* Jesus is seen by John the Baptist who then instructs his disciples to follow him (John 1:35). So an attentive reader is left rather confused over where Jesus was the *following day* after the baptism. According to the first three gospels, he was in the wilderness alone, where he remained so for the next forty days, but according to the fourth gospel he was out and about gathering disciples.

Such a discrepancy was noticed very early by the third century Church Father Origen, who writes:

"If the discrepancy between the Gospels is not solved, we must give up our trust in the Gospels, as being true and written by a divine spirit, or as records worthy of credence, for both these characters are held to belong to these works. Those who accept the four Gospels, and who do not consider that their apparent discrepancy is to be solved analogically (by mystical interpretation), will have to clear up the difficulty, raised above, about the forty days of the temptation, a period for which no room can be found in any way in John's narrative; and they will also have to tell us when it was that the Lord came to Capernaum. If it was after the six days of the period of His baptism, the sixth being that of the marriage at Cans of Galilee, then it is clear that the temptation never took place" (*Commentary on John*, Book 10).

Origen continues and explains that at times the gospel texts cannot be interpreted literally as the above example shows and must be interpreted allegorically. Other Christians have argued that the authors of the gospels simply have different intentions when writing their accounts, and that the author John wanted to focus of the baptism of Jesus and the commissioning of Jesus, and did not bother to speak of the Temptation.

My issue with such an interpretation is that there is a direct contradiction, since the Gospel of John states that Jesus was seen making disciples *the very next day*, thus showing that the author John had no idea about the Temptation in the wilderness. If he did, and felt it unworthy to mention in his gospel, he would not have written that it was the next day... To Muslims, these issues are important and support the point of view that the authors of the gospels were not divinely inspired.

[52] Important Words

σατανᾶ (*Satana*)- Noun, genitive singular, masculine of Σατανᾶς (*Satanos*) meaning: *Satan; adversary; a supernatural evil being* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). In the gospels **Satan** is normally referred to as a Supernatural being; in other instances it may refer to a person who opposes something good. Satan is a force against God, he has his own angels, too, within his dominion of fire where the sinful are sent (Matthew 25:42). It was Satan who caused Judas to betray Jesus (Luke 22:3) and he would enter into people's hearts and snatch away the good (Matthew 13:19).

[53] The period of **forty**, whether in days, months or years has a special significance. It has always been linked to a time of purification and purging of sins; such examples include:

1. It rained for forty days in the time of Noah (Genesis 7:12).
2. Moses was on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights (Ex 24:8).
3. The Israelites wandered the desert for forty years (Deut 8:2).
4. Elijah fasted for forty days and nights (I Kings 14:8).
5. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah too went into seclusion for forty days. For more details on Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, see Introduction.

Jesus may not actually have been in the wilderness for **forty days**; what is meant is that it was the time he spent alone in order to purify himself, just like many prophets before him had done. Whilst it is not entirely impossible to abstain from food for a period of forty days, Jesus most likely did eat, but very little; he must have fasted daily for forty days, eating just once or twice during the day. The practice of fasting and eating little is also encouraged in Islam, with numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) discouraging Muslims from eating to their fill. One of the primary reasons is to discipline the soul and to encourage the believer to detach themselves from this world.

In the wilderness, Jesus is being **tempted by Satan**. He was also with **wild animals**; which may well signify evil spirits, as in Greek culture demons and evil spirits were often portrayed as wild beasts: A Greek magical amulet dating back to the late Roman period was discovered and on it the following words were inscribed regarding the exorcism of

a woman: "I adjure you (plural) by the Living God, that every spirit and apparition and *every beast*, be gone from the soul of this woman" (Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae*. Part I: Published Texts of Known Provenance. Papyrologica Coloniensia 22/1. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

With regards to Jesus being **served by angels**, some Christians have argued that this implied that he was divine. However, this is quite far-fetched, the Angels were simply serving or taking care of Jesus. But again, this should not be interpreted literally. Jesus was not in seclusion with a host of Angels doing his bidding and the occasional wild animal coming along and carrying out some service. This makes a mockery of the Prophet.

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the 2nd Khalifa of the Promised Messiah has serious concerns over the above account, he writes:

"The incidents recorded here are nothing but delusions. The laws of God are against them. On this earth man lives in the company of men and not in that of animals or satans or angels... We do not have satans living visibly with men in this world, nor do we find angels doing visible services for men...Nor do we have Satan coming to a human being and carrying him off with him, so that the man follows him and obeys him against his will, rebelling only occasionally. Nor do we have angels coming and doing such services as baking bread, cooking and fetching water. In fairy tales we do have such accounts, but what place can they have in a religious book? If the New Testament were a book like Kiplings *Jungle book*, it would have been a different matter altogether. But the New Testament is a book for the religious guidance of man. What use can such a book have for fairy tales of this kind?" (*Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran*, 1985, p.59)

Finally, it is worth mentioning that neither the gospels nor the Quran advocate the practice of seclusion from humanity on a *permanent* basis. As noted above, prophets have often undergone a period of seclusion for approximately a month or so, but never on a permanent basis. Jesus never advocated it, nor did the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). Explaining the true aims of the bait, (the oath of allegiance), the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad states:

"The system of bait had been established solely to gather together a group of the righteous people in a Jamaat (community) so that a weighty group of righteous people should make a holy impact on the world... they should not be like those heedless dervishes and hermits who have no awareness of what Islam needs, nor have sympathy for their brothers..." (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, fifth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, *Conditions of Bai'at and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi*, 2005, p.11)

[54] Important Words

See note in Mark 1:1 for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*/gospel). The WEB translates the word as *Good News* which is correct, however I have opted for the above, see notes on next verse for a fuller explanation.

[55] Textual Variant

The WEB translated the latter part of this verse as 'preaching the Good News *of God's Kingdom*,' However, this is from late manuscripts such as the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century CE) and Codex Bzae (fifth century CE). While earlier manuscripts such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (both fourth century CE) read as above. The variant is the result of scribal harmonisation either to the next verse which has Jesus speak about the Kingdom of God or of Matthew 4:17 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.180).

Commentary

After Jesus goes into the wilderness to exercise some seclusion, he returns to Galilee and begins to preach. It is likely that he received numerous revelations from God during his

time in seclusion and thus was commanded by God to proclaim His message.

[56] Important Words

See note in [Mark 1:1](#) for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*/gospel). The WEB translated the above as *Good news*. I have opted to translate the word as above, as preaching God's message is the primary goal and mission of God's prophets.

Commentary

Mark explains why John was arrested in [6:17](#). **The Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent** was initially spoken by John the Baptist according to Matthew 3:2. The simple statement echoing John's, would indicate that Jesus used it and set out to continue the mission of repentance of John. He also seems to have begun preaching and proclaiming God's message after John was arrested, who obviously was unable to preach further.

The words **The time has been fulfilled** may well be our author Mark's own words, to stress that Jesus came and fulfilled God's eternal plan. The phrase is very Pauline in nature, compared with what Paul states in his letter to the Galatian Church: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the Law (Galatians 4:4).

[57] Simon, son of Jonah, was one of the chief apostles of Jesus. He was given the surname Peter, meaning *Rock* in Greek and in Aramaic Kefa or Cephas (Matthew 16:18). He was a fisherman before he encountered Jesus, coming from Capernaum where he owned a house: living with him were presumably his wife and mother-in-law. It is uncertain whether he had a family though, since Paul informs the Corinthians that Peter had with him his wife, who accompanied him on his journeys (1 Cor 9:5) but no children are mentioned.

In the gospels, Peter is often portrayed as the chief apostle, often being addressed by Jesus and being the spokesperson for the other disciples. As already mentioned in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels, the early Church was divided into two: the Paulines and the Petrites; the latter following Peter's views in his preaching missions, which involved preaching to Jews (and maybe some Gentiles) and inviting them to join the Jewish Church; that being those original followers of Jesus who remained Jews and followed the Torah Law.

Some Christians, particularly Roman Catholics may view Peter to be the head of the Church after the departure of Jesus, but this is not the case, as it was Jesus' own brother James who became its leader, and from whom Peter himself took orders. It does seem though, that Peter was the chief Jewish apostle or missionary, in that he was the chief Christian who travelled and preached the message of Jesus while James remained in Jerusalem running the Church.

[58] Andrew was the brother of Peter and presumably lived with him as well in Capernaum. According to Mark, Matthew and Luke, he was a fisherman like his brother, but the Gospel of John has him and Peter being disciples of John the Baptist, who after hearing their Master (John) point out Jesus, leaves him and follows Jesus.

[59] Why Jesus calls Peter and his brother fishers of men is rather confusing. It echoes scripture where God turns evil men into fish and they are dragged out by hooks and nets (Habakkuk 1:14-15). The opposite seems to be the case above though; that Jesus calls his disciples **fishers of men**, so that they can go and save men. This makes no sense. How is being caught by fishermen in a net a good thing for fish? They end up suffocating and dying!

If Jesus did say the above, the context must be different to the above, or at least he would have said more, since it must have meant that he was making his disciples excellent

preachers of the faith. If Jesus did not say it, then our author Mark simply inherited the saying from a Church tradition, and being unaware of its context, simply added it here without much thought; thus inventing something quite odd.

[60] **James** was another member of the twelve apostles, whose rank seems to be quite high as he was one of the three who witnessed The Transfiguration (Mark 9: 2-10). Even though he seems quite important, the gospels contain very little information about him; however, he is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles where his death is spoken of under instruction of Herod Agrippa (41-44 CE).

[61] **John**, is the brother of James above. He and his brother are portrayed as typical Galileans; who were portrayed rather poorly in Jerusalem circles; they were often taunted for their lack of knowledge of the Torah and specific details of the Law; for example in Judea work had to cease at midday on the eve of the Passover, but for the Galileans this rule was extended to the entire day due to their lack of knowledge of such details (mPesahim 4:5).

John and his brother James were named *sons of thunder* by Jesus (Mark 3:17). But neither of the brothers is mentioned by name in the fourth gospel, even though Christian tradition has it that John was the author of the gospel, yet this is very unlikely. For further details see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book.

[62] The calling of the first disciples illustrated by Mark is very deceiving. The image portrayed is that the fishermen were so overawed by Jesus' order that they dropped everything and complied with his instruction immediately. But reading the other gospels, the reader can see there is more to it than what Mark portrays (see [Matthew 4:18-22](#), [Luke 5:1-11](#) and [John 1:35-51](#)).

In fact, if you read all four accounts, you'll notice that they are different and are rather impossible to reconcile: When did Jesus call his disciples? Early in his career (Mark) or later after he travelled around Galilee preaching? (Luke). Did Peter simply drop everything and follow Jesus? (Mark); or did he follow him after Jesus told him where to fish? (Luke); or was he introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew? (John). Simply put, the authors of the gospels had access to different traditions and wrote them down, unaware that they were contradicting each other.

The story above in Mark has some similarities with the calling of Elisha by Elijah in 1 Kings 19:19-21. There Elijah *casts* his mantle over Elisha like the *casting* of the nets above; Elisha then asks permission to kiss his *father* and mother before following Elijah, but the sons of Zebedee show more devotion by simply leaving their *father* in the boat with the other workers.

A similar calling story is attested in first century Greek literature as well;

"And indeed, once when I went to the house of a lad, a son of extremely prosperous parents, I reclined in a banquet hall adorned all about with inscriptions and gold, so that there was no place where you could spit. Therefore, when something lodged in my throat, I coughed and glanced around me. Since I had no place to spit, I spat at the lad himself. When he rebuked me for this, I retorted, 'Well then, so and so, so you blame me for what happened and not yourself? It was you decorated the walls and pavement for the banquet hall, leaving only yourself unadorned, as a place fit to spit onto!' He answered, 'You appear to be criticising my lack of education, but you won't be able to say this anymore, I don't intend to fall one step behind you.' From the next day after, he distributed his property to his relatives and followed me" (Pseudo-Diogenes 38:2-5).

[63] After the Call of the Disciples in the previous section; Jesus along with his new followers then travel to **Capernaum** where he begins to preach his message. The author Mark

emphasises urgency; Jesus and his disciples enter Capernaum and they enter the **Synagogue immediately** on the **Sabbath**.

[64] The **scribes** were teachers of the Law. Jesus taught in a different way and system; being a Prophet and guided by God, Jesus' teaching would have stood out amongst other men. This is attested in the Holy Quran as well, where God states:

"And HE (God) will teach him (Jesus) the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel" (3:49)

[65] Important Words

Φιμῶθητι (*Fimóthiti*) – verb aorist passive imperative 2ns singular of φιμῶ (*Fimow*) meaning: (*put to*) *silence, deprive of an argument, be without an answer* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates this word as *quiet*, however I have preferred the above agreeing with the RSV.

[66] Demon-possession played a major part of people's beliefs throughout history and in particular in ancient times. Mentally ill patients or even people who opposed God were often accused of demon-possession or witch-craft; which resulted in thousands of innocent people being hanged or burnt alive, for example the famous Salem witch trials in the seventeenth century.

What Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue is not mentioned; perhaps the 'demon-possessed' man simply opposed what Jesus was teaching. Like the advent of all prophets, they require radical changes to society and challenge the beliefs of the existing people. In other words they destroy the existing false beliefs. It is possible that the man tried to argue with Jesus, and Jesus simply silenced him through powerful and irrefutable arguments; such a spectacle would have impressed the crowds. This too depends on the status of the man rebuked and silenced and may explain why Jesus instructed the demon-possessed man to be silent. However, this silencing of demons is a familiar trait within the Gospel of Mark; it is referred to as the *Messianic Secret of Mark* (see under [Mark 3:12](#) for more details of what this is).

As already mentioned, demon-possession seemed to be a very common belief in both the Jewish and Greek cultures in ancient times. The first Jewish example is found in the Old Testament, where David plays the harp which drives the evil spirit from King Saul (1Sam 16:23). Apollonius of Tyana who lived in the first century CE is also said to have exorcised demons. He is reported to have stoned a blind man who was in fact a demon, and when finally they removed the stones, they found the demon in the form of a large dog (The Life of Apollonius IV:10).

John M. Hull in his book *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (1974) points out many similarities between the gospels and ancient Magical Papyri manuscripts dating from the second to the fifth centuries CE. Even though these are dated after the writing of the gospels, scholars stress that the phrases and formulae were used in times as far back as the Egyptians, Solomon and many others before Jesus. The phrase **I know who you are** is a common phrase cried out by demons. Hull finds a close parallel: 'I know you, Hermes, who you are and whence you came and which your city is' (PGM VIII.13).

The silencing of the demon by Jesus above is also in accordance with ancient magicians; this was to prevent the demon from speaking some incantation or phrase which would have harmed Jesus. Hull discusses the speech of the demons; he explains that the Exorcist allowed the demon to speak, but it must not be allowed to say too much. The exorcist will have the advantage if he knows the demon's name, but must be careful in case the demon gets his name and uses it against him! Jesus, too, is said to follow this practice in Mark 5:9 where he inquires the name of a demon.

Jesus' words: **Come out of him!** seem to be a standard formula within Jewish tradition to exorcise demons. The Talmud contains many examples of the use of this formula:

Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and Eleazar ben Yose from the second century CE cried out similar words to a demon whose name they learnt to be Ben Temalion. “Ben Temalion, *come out!* Ben Temalion, *come out!*” (bMeilah 17b). The formula is also attested in the Magical Papyri: ‘Come out whatever demon you may be, and depart from so and so...come out of him, demon, for I will bind you with the adamantine book...and I will deliver you to the black chaos in perdition’ (PGM IV.1245).

The **crying out in a loud voice** by the demon-possessed man is again a similar occurrence. Manuscripts of The Testament of Solomon dating from the first to the third centuries CE contain catalogues of demons summoned by King Solomon. They mention Solomon summoning the Prince of demons, Beelzebul, who when hit by a ring given to Solomon *cried aloud with a mighty voice* (1:13).

With such parallels, the exorcising of demons in the gospels can be seen to contain little factual information, rather they share parallels with similar exorcism stories written before and after Jesus. Some scholars will attempt to apply a logical explanation of the superstitious stories, whilst others will reject them outright as inventions of the authors. It's best to apply both interpretive techniques; there might have been a debate, or some mentally ill person whom Jesus cured or silenced. These stories might then have been exaggerated by our gospel authors making Jesus seem the greatest of healers and exorcists.

When it comes to the Islamic tradition, there is *no authentic tradition speaking of demon-possession*. Many modern Muslims do believe in Jinn-possession and often have very similar exorcism practices to some modern Christians. However, it should be stressed that such exorcisms and practices are not attested in any ancient and authentic tradition, nor does the Holy Quran speak of any type of demon or Jinn possession. In other words, there is no demon possession tradition in Islam.

[67] One of the most famous Jesus scholars in the twentieth century was Geza Vermes, who explained the point about Jesus speaking with authority: He explains that often the Rabbis would teach by handing down a legally binding doctrine, in the name of a master, from which they had been taught, often deriving a chain of the tradition, going back to Moses himself (quite similar to the Islamic traditions of *Hadith*, only not as stringent). However, Jesus, being a Prophet of God, the Messiah would have no need to trace back and he himself did not learn from such masters, but instead he taught in a completely different style and technique than these previous teachers: people would have been amazed at this teaching coupled with exorcisms and cures (*Jesus the Jew*, 1981, p.27).

[68] The people were amazed about the new teachings or interpretations brought forth by Jesus. What was also surprising was the way the people who opposed God were subdued and obeyed Jesus. His fame began to spread after this event.

[69] After silencing and casting out the demon in the Synagogue, Jesus along with his four disciples visit Simon's (Peter) house where his **mother-in-law** is ill. Again, the narrative is quite similar to a typical exorcism account; in that Jesus enters a place, he is confronted with an ill person, and the fever **leaves** the mother-in-law (much like the demon leaves a person). She is healed and then to illustrate that the healing is complete, she gets up and serves Jesus.

Unrelated, but it is worth noting that from this account we can assume that Simon was married. This is interesting and has been brought up by numerous scholars in the past: the fact that a married man was called by Jesus, and that after becoming his disciple still maintained his property and family goes against the Roman Catholic tradition where bishops and priests are not permitted to marry. The scholar Schnackenburg wrote about this in detail and still awaits an answer (Schnackenburg, marginal note: *Why do Protestant theologians speak so little about the unmarried Paul?*).

[70] After Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, he remains at the house. But shortly in the evening, many of the city's ill are brought to Jesus to heal.

[71] Textual Variant

Two early Christian scribes thought to add *to be the Christ* at the end of this verse, it's not entirely sure why they thought to add and amend the text written by the author Mark, but most scholars believe the scribes wanted to make the above text similar to Luke 4:41 which ends like that (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.180).

Commentary

Why Jesus did not permit them to speak is often referred to as the *Messianic Secret of Mark* and is discussed in more detail under [Mark 3:12](#).

[72] After a busy day healing and casting out demons, Jesus rests and sleeps in Peter's house. He is reported to have woken up very early, **while it was still dark** before the sun had risen. Jesus goes out and finds a secluded place to pray. In essence he went out to perform the *Tahajjud* prayer; the pre-dawn prayer in Islam which was performed regularly by the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is alluded to in the Holy Quran in 73:7:

“Verily, the getting up at night (for prayers) is the most potent means of subduing the self and most effective speech.”

It is a very common prayer performed by Muslims all around the world, but sadly it has been a practice dropped by the majority of Christians.

[73] “And (Jesus will be) a Messenger to the Children of Israel...” (Holy Quran 3:50). The primary mission of any prophet is to proclaim the message given to them by God, and this is exactly what Jesus is indicating here, that the primary reason for which he came was to preach to the people. If it was to atone for the sins of mankind as it is often written in traditional Christian commentaries, then the proclamation of the message should have been secondary if not completely redundant. Or if he did travel to different towns and cities to preach, the main focus of his preaching should have been the atonement and his future sacrifice. However, this is something very rarely spoken of by Jesus himself.

[74] While preaching in Galilee, a **leper** approaches Jesus and asks to be made clean, i.e. cured of his disease.

[75] Textual Variant

The WEB states that Jesus was **moved with compassion**, instead of **anger** as I have opted above. The majority of ancient manuscripts read that Jesus was moved with pity, however, there are other ancient manuscripts which say that he was *moved with anger* (e.g. the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Bezae). So someone either changed it from anger to pity, or from pity to anger. Which is the correct reading?

The Greek words are completely different *σπλαγχνισθεῖς (splaghnistheis)* and *ὀργισθεῖς (orgistheis)*, so scribes could not have accidentally written the wrong word, which sometimes happens, but not in this case. This case is a deliberate change to the text, the traditional Christian view would no doubt be that Jesus felt *compassion* for the man and therefore healed him. The very famous textual critic Bart Ehrman delves into great detail explaining why he feels that the second reading (*anger*) is most likely the original:

Ehrman argues in his book *Misquoting Jesus* (p.134-139) that there are two possibilities: 1) A Christian scribe read the text as Jesus *was angry* and then changed it to Jesus *was moved by compassion*; or 2) The Scribe read Jesus *was moved by compassion* and then changed it to Jesus *was angry*. It is more likely that a scribe would carry out option 1; Jesus being angry is a more difficult reading and therefore this is likely to be the original text; no doubt the scribe felt a bit uncomfortable and perhaps baffled as to why Jesus would be angry at such a request.

The other pieces of proof that *angry* is the correct reading are within the Bible itself. Not even looking at manuscripts, there are two further witnesses to the above Markan text; Matthew and Luke (Readers, remember that the authors Matthew and Luke had in front of them the Gospel of Mark when they themselves were writing their gospels and copied much of the gospel of Mark; see [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book for more details). So, what do Matthew and Luke say? Do they read *compassion* or *anger*? Interestingly, they say nothing! Both Matthew and Luke omit Jesus' emotion, but why? If Mark read that Jesus was *moved by compassion*, why omit it? Surely, the authors of the gospel would want to portray Jesus as a compassionate and loving teacher. They do so elsewhere and whenever Mark records Jesus being compassionate, either Matthew or Luke retains it. However, if Mark read that Jesus was *angry*, then that would be a good enough reason to omit such an emotion and this is exactly what seems to have happened.

This is not the first instance that such omissions and modifications have happened between Mark and Matthew and Luke. Elsewhere in Mark 3:5 Jesus looks around *with anger* at those in the Synagogue who watch to see whether he will heal the man with the withered hand. Both Matthew and Luke omit the reference of Jesus being angry. It is repeated in Mark 10:14, where Jesus is *annoyed* at the disciples for not permitting the children to be blessed. Matthew and Luke copy the text almost word for word but omit the reference to Jesus' *annoyance* (Matt 19:14, Luke 18:16).

Therefore, it seems that both Matthew and Luke have no issues with retaining a reference to compassion, yet have serious issues with references to Jesus' anger. This led to numerous scholars believing that the original reading of the above verse of Mark read that Jesus *was angry* and that Matthew and Luke omitted it.

Why was Jesus *angry* then? And even after Jesus heals the man, he does not treat the poor man with kid gloves; he speaks harshly to him and then drives him out. In fact, when analysing the picture painted by Mark of Jesus, particularly the opening scenes, it becomes clear we are not dealing with a mild-mannered man. He is introduced by a prophet from the wilderness (John the Baptist); and he is then cast out into the wilderness himself to battle with wild animals and Satan. He comes out victorious, proclaiming the urgent message of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and instantly calls his disciples together, who drop everything and follow him. He teaches with authority in Synagogues and is challenged by a demon that he overcomes with ease. To summarise, Jesus is a powerful charismatic prophet, a man with authority who is not to be messed about with. So when a leper approaches him, interrupting his urgent mission, he may have become angry, healed him, harshly rebuked him and then sent him away.

However, Erhman has another possible explanation: he noticed that Jesus gets angry elsewhere in Mark's Gospel; in Chapter 3 Jesus becomes angry when the Pharisees argue that he has no authority to heal a man on the Sabbath. In another instance in Chapter 9, when returning from the Transfiguration, Jesus is confronted with a man and his son who is possessed with a demon, and the man begs Jesus with similar words to the leper above: '*If you are able*, have pity on us and help us.' In that instance Jesus again responds angrily. It seems that whenever anyone doubts Jesus' ability to help/heal he becomes angry; of course Jesus is able to help and heal! In the case of the leper, the latter asks Jesus if he wishes it, he will heal him. Jesus heals him, and while still a little miffed speaks to him harshly and drives him out.

[76] After the man is healed, Jesus instructs him not to tell anyone and then tells him to get out and to present himself to the Temple priest, and to make an offering for his **cleansing** as laid out in Leviticus 14. However, when reading the verses of Chapter 14 in Leviticus, it is highly unlikely that Jesus would have followed them. The passage speaks of the cleansed leper taking two birds, killing one and dipping the other in the blood of the dead one and sprinkling the blood over the healed leper. Once this was done, the priest would then announce that the leper was clean. Such awkward and rather unhygienic practices cannot be from God, and must have been practices (much like the sacrificial animals) which the Jews borrowed from their neighbouring pagans, see notes under [Mark 11:15](#) for more details about sacrifices and how it was not of divine origin.

If Jesus did command the healed leper to go to the Temple, it would have been to get the approval from the priest and not go through such weird and bloody practices.

[77] In Jewish Law, it was not permitted for lepers to participate in many of the rituals. This was most probably to prevent the healthy people from mixing with the lepers and

contracting the disease. But it seems from the passage that the leper was more interested in just receiving a cure and did not have the rituals in mind at all. This could have been another reason why Jesus was angry. He cured the leper of his illness or declared him clean and sternly told him to go immediately to the priests to thank God.

This is now the second time Jesus instructs someone not to tell anyone about a miracle; this is known as the *Messianic Secret*; see under [Mark 3:11](#) for details. As a result of the leper's announcing and telling everyone what Jesus had done for him, the latter's popularity grew enormously, to the point where he had to avoid densely populated areas like towns and cities and was only able to preach in the open.

[78] Important Words

παραλυτικὸν (*paralytikón*) adjective accusative singular masculine of παραλυτικός (*paralytikós*) meaning: *paralytic, unable to walk, disabled* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[79] As Jesus' reputation grew for being a miracle worker and healer, people brought to him more and more of the sick. Mark mentions the case of a **paralytic**: because of the crowd, the people had to climb on to the **roof** and dig a hole to lower him down into the house! This may have happened, but it also may have been an exaggeration by Mark. It may have simply been a skylight, a door to the roof or maybe a window.

[80] It has often been argued by some Christians that the act of forgiving sins shows that Jesus was divine; afterall, only God can forgive the sins of a person, it is said. However, the act of **forgiving sins** can imply *healing*. In contemporary literature, the Prayer of Nabonidus among the Dead Sea Scrolls found in Cave 4 reads: "The words of the prayer uttered by Nabunai King of the land of Babylon, the great king, when he was afflicted with an evil ulcer in Teiman by decree of the Most High God. *I was afflicted with an evil ulcer for seven years... and an exorcist pardoned my sins*. He was a Jew from among the children of the exile of Judah..." (4Q242).

The above account is similar to what Jesus says, in the Dead Sea Scrolls; a Jew *forgives the sins* of a king and heals him from the evil ulcer. It may be that Jesus used the same phrase with the same type of meaning. The reaction of the scribes can either be due to their own ignorance, or more likely the imagination of the author Mark, who, when he heard Jesus forgive sins, may well have invented a setting, whereby Jesus was then challenged by the scribes.

Furthermore, if we take a step back, we actually see that there isn't anything wrong with what Jesus says, he only tells the man that his sins are forgiveness. He himself was not forgiving the man's sins. So no problem in reality.

[81] The **scribes** seem to have misunderstood Jesus and felt that he had no right in forgiving sins, since that can only be done by God.

[82] Many scholars consider this passage to be composite; a miracle story into which a controversial section (5-10) has been inserted. Certainly the story runs more smoothly without this section, and the repetition of **he said to the paralytic** in verse 10 is clumsy. Thus Mark most likely took two separate stories and wove them together to create the above, making the above historically very unlikely to have happened.

It may be worth noting that this is the first instance in the gospels of Jesus' use of the phrase **son of man**. Literally *the son of the man*; in Aramaic *bar enasha* or *bar nasha*, the Aramaic words signifying either *man* or *the man*, a noun, or *someone*, the indefinite pronoun. For many of our Christian friends, this was a divine title; they argue the case from the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, in the apocalyptic vision in Chapter 7 verses 13 and 14: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a *son of man*, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and

languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

However, is it really a divine title? The best way to figure that out is to check other instances of where the phrase has been used, such as within the Old Testament:

“God is not man, that he should lie, or a *son of man* (ben-Adam), that he should repent” (Numbers 23:19).

“My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God, like that of a *son of man* (ben-Adam) with his neighbour” (Job 16:20-21).

“Yahweh, what is man that thou dost regard him, or the *son of man* (ben-enosh) that thou dost think of him?” (Psalms 144:3)

In the book of Ezekiel, the phrase *son of man* has been used over ninety times by God to refer to Ezekiel himself.

Thus, in all instances of the phrase used in the Old Testament, the phrase simply refers to mankind in general. The very famous Jewish scholar Geza Vermes also argued that the phrase may be categorised as an Aramaic circumlocution in which the speaker, always Jesus in the Synoptics (first three gospels), wishing to avoid a direct reference to himself, replaces / by the equivocal and more modest *son of man* (*The Changing Faces of Jesus*, 2000, under Matthew 16:13).

Talmudic examples of the phrase *bar nasha* (*son of man*) also illustrate the above point as well: Rab Kahana asks his master Rabbi Yohanan a question: “If *bar nash* is despised by his mother, but honoured by another of his father’s wives, where should he go?” Yohanan replied: “He should go where he is honoured.” Thereupon Kahana left. Then Rabbi Yohanan was told: “Kahana has gone to Babylon”. He exclaimed: “What! Has he gone without asking leave?” They said to him: “The story he told you was his request for leave” (Talmud; yBer.Sc). In this Talmudic story, the land of Israel is the mother, Babylon one of the father’s wives and the *son of man* is Kahana himself.

Another example is found in the Midrash Rabbah: “Not even a bird is caught without the will of Heaven. How much less the soul of *bar nasha*. So he went forth and found that matters had calmed” (Gen. R. 79:6).

Thus the above show that in the Aramaic language, *bar nasha* or *the son of man* is just another phrase and words used to refer to oneself or to general man. The phrase is even used in the Dead Sea Scrolls: “...so that they march no more in the paths of uprightness, to lead men astray to the ways of the Pit, and seduce with flatteries every *son of man*” (4Q184, The Seductress, verse 15).

Hence, we see no proof whatsoever that the phrase *son of man* was a divine title. When it comes to the book of Daniel, especially the vision in Chapter 7, we cannot say that this special figure was the Messiah. Most readers probably have not heard of Daniel 7, which is fine, and the following analysis might not be interesting to them. However, for those who have heard it from their Christian friends that Daniel was talking about the Messiah, I advise them to read on.

It is very unlikely that the original author of the book of Daniel thought of the Messiah when referring to the *one like a son of man* in Dan 7:13. There is almost universal consensus amongst modern scholars on the meaning of the Hebrew phrase; that it simply means *one like a human being* (Joseph John Collins, *Hermenia*, Daniel 7:13), yet disagreements do exist amongst the scholars regarding the identity of this figure. Some traditional Jewish and almost all Christian interpretations have pointed to the figure being the Messiah to come, yet this is disputed by the majority of scholars today, since the author makes no link or mention of the Messiah in his work. If the *one like the son of man* or *human being* was to be the Messiah, surely the author would have made it somewhat clearer.

Therefore, who is this figure described in the book of Daniel? There are three main views. The first is that the figure is the Messiah, which is not upheld by many academic scholars these days. The second view is that the figure is an angelic being, most likely the angel Michael who is seen later in the book of Daniel as the representative of the Jewish people (10:21, 12:1). This view is shared by scholars like John Collins. The angel Gabriel is seen by Daniel as the appearance of a man in the next chapter (8:15) and he makes another man-like appearance in Chapter 9 verse 21. The following chapter has Daniel lifting his eyes and seeing another man clothed in linen, whose face has the appearance of lightning, obviously referring to another angelic being; thus a level of consistency is maintained throughout the book, where angels appear in the form of men. However, it should be pointed out that in the references to the angels in the chapters following Chapter 7, where they are described in human likeness, they are clearly identified as angels, either by name or by their appearances. Yet the *one like a son of man* is nowhere identified as an angel in Chapter 7.

Finally, the other popular view is often referred to as the Collective View, championed by Maurice Casey, who has written an entire book putting forward his case (Maurice Casey, *Son of Man the Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (1979). The view follows on from the techniques already used in the Book of Daniel; that being allegory. The vision begins with Daniel seeing four beasts, which are later interpreted to represent four oppressing kingdoms (verse 17). Following on from this, it would make sense that the fifth image, one resembling a man would also represent a nation or people. This had led many scholars including Casey to argue that it represents the Jewish people. This use of imagery (beast versus man) has already been used by the same author in Chapter 4, where Nebuchadnezzar opposes God and is transformed into a beast-like nature and only when repenting did he return to his human-like nature.

The last two interpretations (Angelic Being and Collective View) are most dominant amongst modern scholars, arguing that the author of the Book of Daniel never meant the figure to be the Messiah, and as such the much later Jewish and Christian interpretation often misunderstood the text.

Thus, had Jesus used the phrase, it would *not* have been a Messianic or divine title, simply rather a reference to mankind in general or as another method of referring to himself. In every instance in the Old Testament the phrase has always been used in such a way. Even the Daniel text reads that one *like* a son of man is seen in the clouds, i.e. one *like* a human being.

[83] **Levi son of Alphaeus** is apparently a disciple but is not mentioned among the twelve in Mark 3:16-19. Some Christians have argued that this is Matthew who had written the gospel of Matthew. The interpretation is based on the fact that in Matthew's parallel of the story (Matt 9:9-13) he names the tax-collector as Matthew and not Levi. You might recall from the Introduction that the author of the Gospel of Matthew copied from the Gospel of Mark.

The problem with the above interpretation is that the author of the Gospel could not have been a disciple (see [Introduction of the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book). Also, why does our author Mark call him Levi (Luke's Gospel also called him Levi) when his real name was Matthew? And why the Gospel of Matthew changed his source (the Gospel of Mark) is also uncertain.

[84] The **Pharisees** are often described as the ancestors of present day Orthodox Jews. The majority of other sects died out shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Once the others were out of the picture, the Pharisees were no longer referred to by that name but became normative/mainstream Judaism. What differentiated Pharisees from many of the other sects in Jesus' day was their belief in the Oral Law; that being an Oral Law which was revealed to Moses at the same time as the written Law in the form of the Torah. They also believed in the afterlife as opposed to the Sadducees as will be discussed below.

The New Testament's portrayal of the Pharisees is very negative, most likely due to them being the main opponents of Jesus. They are often portrayed as small minded, hypocritical bigots, devoid of all understanding of the Law. Yet at the same time, many of the great teachers of Judaism in the past were Pharisees: Rabbi Akiva; Hillel; and

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai for example.

A modern analogy may be the religious clergy or teachers amongst the Muslim world, the Maulanas or Mullahs. Not all are bad, just like not all the Pharisees were bad, but there were a fair share of close-minded and what can be described as literalists, very similar to the modern Muslims who, too, view and interpret the Holy Quran and teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a literal fashion.

In fact, the similarity of the modern Muslim and the Pharisee or even general Jew of Jesus' time is quite startling: The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“The Prophet (saw) said: ‘My Ummah will face what bani Israel faced step by step, even if one of them approached his mother publicly (sexually) there will be one of my Ummah will approach his mother. The people of Israel divided into 72 sects, my Ummah will divide into 73 sects, all of them are in the hellfire, and one of them is in paradise.’ We asked ‘Which one is saved?’ The Prophet (saw) said: ‘The one that is on what me and my companions are on today.’” (Sunan ibn Majah 3981, Kitab Al Fitān)

The number of sects is most likely symbolical, but the way to identify the saved sect or group is important. All Muslims will claim to be the ones who ‘are like the companions’ of the Prophet. But what all the groups have to prove is, how are they *not like the Jews* and all other groups *like the Jews*? It is only the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association which stands out in this, and it is related to the acceptance of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him): If we analyse the reasons *why* the modern Muslims reject his claimant, you’ll notice that the reasons are exactly the same as the Jews’ rejection of Jesus:

- The Jews believed that Prophet Elijah had ascended to heaven bodily and would return in the end of days.
- The Muslims believe that Prophet Jesus ascended to heaven bodily and would return in the end of days.

- The Jews interpreted the prophecies about the Messiah literally (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for details).
- The Muslims interpret the prophecies about the Promised Messiah literally as well.

- The Jews expected a warrior like Messiah who would free them from bondage and defeat their enemies.
- The Muslims expect a warrior like Messiah who would defeat all of their enemies as well.

- The Jews had become rather hard-hearted and aggressive. Jesus preached forgiveness and peace.
- The Muslims generally have become rather hard-hearted and aggressive. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad preached forgiveness and peace.

- Many Jews abuse Jesus and claim he died a cursed death.
- Many Muslims abuse Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and claim he died a cursed death.

The above are just a few similarities, the list can get quite big. But it just shows how history repeats itself and how accurate the prophecy of the Holy Prophet of Islam was.

[85] This is not realistic; are we to imagine that scribes belonging to Pharisees were following Jesus around observing his eating habits? Surely they had better things to do! It is more likely that word got out in the small town that Jesus was eating with such people which may have drawn the scribes to come and confront his disciples, or at least bring it

up when they came into contact with the disciples.

[86] Jesus returns to his house, or Peter's and begins to eat at the table. It is stated in some translations that the house was Levi's, but this is not in the Greek; although it is possible that Levi held a banquet before leaving and Jesus joined, or that he simply invited his friends over to listen to Jesus preach, providing food.

Seated with him were tax-collectors and sinners. The **tax-collectors** were the agents of the government who collected the tax, many of whom were corrupt and would pocket some of what they collected. **Sinners** here would imply people who normally did not live their lives according to the Law of Moses, or sinners in the eyes of the Pharisees and scribes; and to eat and mix with them was considered taboo by the Pharisees. Jesus overheard their discussions or whispering, to which he answered that prophets do not come for the righteous; it is the wicked that are in danger and in need of guidance. It is they whom prophets target in their preaching and attempt to bring them back to God.

He gives the example of a physician (which all prophets are): They heal the sick; the sick being the ones who are deprived of God's love. Jesus may well have been some sort of healer in the physical sense, but more likely he was a spiritual healer; where his teachings and guidance would have healed many people of their own spiritual illnesses. In the same way did Jesus raise the spiritually dead back to life, i.e. brings them back to God. "Prophets of God are spiritual physicians; they give eyes to those that have lost spiritual sight, and they give hearing to those who are spiritually deaf, and they restore life to those who are spiritually dead." (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.402)

Some scholars question the authenticity of the above passage; they argue that the above story may well have been an invented story of the early Church to be used as ammunition against attacks that they were freely permitting sinners to join them. "If Jesus sat with sinners and ate with them, why can't we admit them into our Church?" This would have mainly been the case with the Gentile Pauline Churches since they permitted people to enter without observing the Jewish Law, and as such would have been referred to as sinners by the Jewish population. The Petrine Churches or Jewish Christians (the original followers of Jesus) would not have been accused of such, since they would only have admitted those who would have followed the Law and encouraged its members to not just follow the Law but go beyond the other Jews in following the Law (see [Matthew 5:20](#)).

In fact, an early Pagan critic of Christianity by the name of Celsus complained about this passage. He writes:

"Christians say that it was to sinners that God has been sent. Why was he not sent to those who were without sin? What evil is it not to have committed sin? God will receive the unrighteous man if he humbles himself on account of his wickedness, but He will not receive the righteous man, although he looks up to Him, (adorned) with virtue from the beginning. All men, then, without distinction, ought to be invited, since all indeed are sinners. What is this preference of sinners over others?

The Christians utter these exhortations for the conversion of sinners, because they are able to gain over no one who is really good and righteous, and therefore open their doors to the most unholy and abandoned of men" (*Origen's Against Celsus*, Book III 62-65).

Celsus was writing against the Pauline Church; he criticised them for targeting and readily accepting sinners since they were unable to gain anyone who was truly virtuous. It might have been that the message of the Church was appealing to sinners: "Just have faith and believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and you will be saved." Such a proclamation might have been the message from certain Gentile based Churches. It should be stressed that the Church, whether it be Pauline or not, did not just permit its members to continue sinning, they were in fact, quite strict in their moral behaviour. However, the proper Church, the Petrine Church headed by James the brother of Jesus was far stricter and would never be considered as sinners by Jews.

[87] There is only one commandment in the Old Testament to **fast**, and that was the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29). However, fasting does seem to have been the practice of attempting to gain divine favour (2 Sam 12:15-23); it was also practised in holy wars (1 Sam 14:24-30) and later, roughly at the same time as Jesus, fasting became a mark of religious devotion (Philo Vit. Cont.34; Tobit 12:8; Psalms of Solomon 3:8). The **Pharisees** and **John the Baptist's disciples** perhaps fasted for similar reasons. This was posed as a question to Jesus as to why his disciples did not fast like the others. It is interesting to note that Jesus' disciples are here accused and not Jesus himself. Why is this? Would they not have just copied their master? We know that Jesus fasted, for example he did so in the Wilderness (Matt 4:2), so why didn't the disciples fast?

The answer is that they *did* fast, just like their master. They were Jews afterall, and as noted above, fasting was a practise of the Jews. Thus it is likely that the above accusation was made up by the early Church. Why did the Church make up the story? Because they were mainly Gentiles who did not really have a tradition of fasting and were then accused by other Jews of not being righteous since they never fasted. So what did the Church do? They create a story where the Jews accuse Jesus and his disciples of not fasting and Jesus then gives them a smart answer. The famous scholar Bultmann was of this point of view as well (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 1976, 18-19).

[88] The claim that Jesus was the **bridegroom** may in fact originate from Paul rather than Jesus himself, and spread to the early Church very quickly. Jesus was at times referred to as the bride-groom and the church as the bride in the letters of Paul, e.g.

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands” (Ephesians 5:23-24).

“I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband” (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Paul's letters were written before the gospels and thus the gospels were likely to have been influenced by them. Whether Jesus did in fact speak the above is not certain. If he did so, he is arguing that people cannot fast while they are eating, drinking and celebrating, but only after the wedding is over can they fast. However, to liken his ministry of preaching repentance to a wedding feast where people eat and get drunk isn't the best analogy. Furthermore, when the bride-groom does leave the wedding feast, the guests do not fall into a gloom and begin fasting. The analogy simply does not make sense.

The final part of the verse, regarding when the bride-groom will be taken away from them betrays strong hints of Jesus' crucifixion. This, too, adds support that the words are not those of Jesus but are in fact those of the author himself, since Jesus never did expect to die on the cross or to be crucified; this will become more evident later in this book. As such it is likely that the above saying was the invention of Mark or his source, perhaps under the influence of the writings of Paul.

[89] Important Words

σχίσμα – noun nominative singular neuter of σχίσμα meaning: *split, rift, division, in a garment a tear or rent* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translate the above as *and a worse hole is made*, however, that is not how the Greek reads. I have opted for the above agreeing with the RSV.

[90] Jesus ends with another parable; the meaning could be that one is not to mix new interpretations and teachings with old ones. The old must be thrown away and the new ones kept; the reader will recall the *new teaching* Jesus taught in Mark 1:17. His teachings have come to replace the teachings of the Pharisees and other interpreters of the Law. With relation to the fasting, Jesus may have disagreed with the *reason* the Pharisees and others fasted, which may have been as a form of boasting (See [Matthew 6:16](#)).

[91] According to Jewish Law, it is not permitted to work on the **Sabbath**. The Old Testament says: “But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not

do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates” (Ex 20:10). The strict Pharisees saw the disciples plucking the **grain** to eat, and objected to Jesus that his disciples were breaking the commandment contained in Exodus. Why the Pharisees were following Jesus and his disciples around on the Sabbath in a grain field is not explained. Much like the previous chapter on fasting, the disciples are accused of breaking the commandment whilst Jesus is left alone, thus pointing to perhaps another story made up by the early Church when it came under fire from the Jews for breaking the Sabbath rules. See under [Mark 3:2](#) for more details on Sabbath laws.

[92] Textual Variant

One relatively early manuscript, the Codex Bezae reads: *he entered into the house of God and ate...* See below the reason why a Christian scribe would have omitted the reference to Abiathar.

[93] In reply to the Pharisees, Jesus quotes the Old Testament (I Samuel 21:6). However, our author Mark gets his facts a little mixed up; the high Priest at the time of David was not **Abiathar**, but his father Ahimelech. The only possible explanation is that Abiathar became High Priest after his father died.

While the Pharisees accuse Jesus’ disciples of breaking the Sabbath rule by plucking grains, Jesus argues by quoting the Old Testament, and showing that certain Laws of the Torah, can be broken or perhaps bent when urgent needs are required, such as hunger. He finally states that the Sabbath was actually made for the benefit of man, not to make life more difficult for man. Thus, if you’re hungry you can make arrangements to eat. Such a statement is echoed in the Talmudic teachings; in the commentary of Exodus 31:14, Mekhilta de R. Ishmael states: “The Sabbath is delivered up to you, not you to the Sabbath.”

[94] This verse has often been interpreted by many Christians that Jesus is claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, i.e. that he himself is permitted to break and abrogate the Sabbath Laws. However, as already explained under [Mark 2:10](#), the phrase *son of man* can and has on numerous occasions been used to refer to general mankind, and the above saying of Jesus is in agreement with the Talmudic saying in the above paragraph. Furthermore, had Jesus meant that he himself is Lord and is able to abrogate the Sabbath Law, then he would not have justified his disciples’ behaviour by quoting the Old Testament, but would have rather argued that he is Lord and that the Sabbath Law does not apply to him and his disciples.

Did Jesus and his followers observe the Sabbath? Yes! Later in Jesus’ ministry, he instructs his disciples to pray that the tribulation in the later days does not occur on the Sabbath (Matt 24:20). Had he abrogated the Sabbath Law, there would be no point in them praying for the tribulations not to occur on the Sabbath. So like a strict Jew as he was, Jesus did observe the Sabbath, but he would have understood and interpreted it differently to the Pharisees; see [Mark 3:2](#) below for further details.

[95] Jesus then enters the same **Synagogue** in Capernaum; this is indicated by the use of **again** at the beginning of the verse.

[96] The Rabbinic rule forbids healing of any nature on the Sabbath, only such healing which saves one’s life is permitted, as mentioned in Mishnah II Yoma 8:6: “And any matter of doubt as to danger to life overrides the prohibitions of the Sabbath.” The Pharisees watched Jesus to see if he would heal a man with such an illness which was not life threatening. They may have been there in the Synagogue to watch Jesus as it may have been his habit to cure people, even on the Sabbath, which for them was a violation of the Law.

According to the Old Testament, in Exodus 20:9 it states: ‘Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work.’ The penalty for violating the Sabbath was often death (Ex 35:2). However, what exactly violates the Sabbath? According to the Mishnah (a collection of Laws

written by later Jews known as Rabbis), many acts are listed which do: acts such as transporting objects; kindling lights; ploughing; washing; sowing; slaughtering; writing (two letters or more); building... to name a few. Elsewhere, the act of healing or performing a thing (eating or drinking medicine) for the intention of healing is also forbidden (m.Sabb. 14:3-4).

[97] Jesus questioned the Jews about their understanding of the Sabbath, but they remained **silent**, not wanting to get into any debate with him seeing that he had already silenced many before and was very well learned of the scriptures.

[98] Textual Variant

The WEB translation adds *as healthy as the other*. Which is not present in the Greek text. I chose to omit these words agreeing with the RSV.

Commentary

Jesus **looked around** to see if anyone would respond to his question, but none did. They were not interested in getting into any debate or discussion with Jesus; all they wanted to see was him healing the man, which would violate the Law in their eyes. Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to show him his hand. He then treated him, healing his hand and broke the Sabbath regulations according to the way the Jews interpreted it.

However, if the above text is to be interpreted literally, what did Jesus do? He only told the man to stretch out his hand. Did that violate the Sabbath Law? No, since no particular action was taken by Jesus and so even if the above account happened as narrated, the Pharisees could not have charged Jesus with working, since he only spoke.

In essence, this passage is much like the previous chapters, which present Jesus' opinion concerning the dos and don'ts of the Sabbath; mercy and compassion are more important; likewise, healing or doing good to a fellow brother overrides the Sabbath Laws.

[99] Our author Mark then makes a statement that the **Pharisees** attempt to trap Jesus using the help of the **Herodians**, who were members or close associates with King Herod. This is the first time Jesus seems to interact with them and it's rather surprising that they already want to kill him. Why on earth would they want him put to death? There is no indication that they disliked him.

One last point relating to the accusation of violating the Sabbath Laws; the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus states that the primary objection raised by the Jews against Jesus was the healing on the Sabbath (1:4). However, none of the canonical gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John) mention this. It may be that some of the Pharisees or other Jews felt that Jesus did break the Sabbath Laws, but felt that they had little evidence to accuse him in a trial, or perhaps it was a grey area and that the accusation would not have brought about what they intended.

[100] Important Words

θλιβωσιν (*Thlibosin*)– verb present active subjunctive 3rd plural of θλιβω (*thlibo*) meaning: *rub against, compress, make narrow, press or crowd against throng* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the final part of the verse as *that they wouldn't press on him*. However, I have opted for the above for simplicity and agreeing with the RSV.

[101] Jesus then withdraws from Capernaum, and moves towards the sea or a lake. People all over Judea come to listen to his new teachings and to be cured by him, for his

healing methods and skills are becoming widespread.

[102]The phrase **son of God** has often caused much confusion to interpreters. Many Christians have understood the term to refer to Jesus and only to Jesus, implying that he is the literal son of God, making him divine and part of the Trinity. Yet, sadly this is interpreting the phrase according to the understanding of the Greeks and pagans, who in turn had numerous gods, sons of gods and demi-gods on earth, who were divine and possessing supernatural powers. Yet, the phrase should be interpreted in its *Jewish tradition* and context:

The Old Testament contains instances of prophets and even common people referred to as *sons of God*. There are three categories or types of people who were given such titles:

- I. Heavenly or angelic beings - Gen 6:2, 4; Deut 32:8
- II. Prophets and Kings – Adam (Luke 1:38); David (Psalms 2:7); Solomon (II Samuel 7:13-14)
- III. The people of Israel – Israel (Exodus 4:22; Deut 14:1; Romans 8:14; John 1:12)

Accordingly, to the Jews, referring to someone as the *son of God* meant only that they had a special relationship with God like all prophets and righteous people have. The title or phrase is used throughout the gospels, and in many instances not in reference to Jesus, e.g. in the Beatitudes, the peacemakers are called the *sons of God* (Matthew 5:9). Also, those believing in Jesus are called the *children of God* (John 1:12).

The phrase is common in Jewish texts outside the Bible as well, and is used as a title of piety. The mid-third century CE teacher, Rabbi Lazar states: “When the Israelites do the will of the Holy One, blessed be he, they are called *sons*, but when they do not do His will, they are not called *sons*” (Talmud, yKid. 61C). The phrase is also present in the Dead Sea Scrolls; Jewish texts written at around the same time as Jesus. In one particular manuscript, the author describes a person giving him titles such as *son of God* as well as *son of the Most High* (Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q246 papyri). This person is not considered to be a divine being in any shape or form. This itself shows that the title was common amongst Jews of the first century as well as later.

It is likely that due to the growth of the Gentile Church, where non-Jewish members were joining, they would not have understood the phrase in the Jewish context, but only in their own. According to their beliefs, those of pagans, both pagan gods and children of pagan gods existed and roamed earth numerous times: the chief god, Zeus, had many consorts with whom he had intercourse and produced kings or half gods; the most famous being Hercules, whose mother was a mortal woman. Physical children of God also existed in Egyptian mythology; examples include Horus, the son Osiris (EA Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 1999, p180).

Along with the divine beings mentioned above, Kings and Emperors during the first century were also referred to as gods: Emperor Augustus and Domitian both used the Latin title *Divi filius* meaning *son of a god* (Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Empire*, 2001, p69). Even the famous Greek philosopher Pythagoras is referred to as *son of the living god* and *son of Apollo* (Thomas Taylor, *Life of Pythagoras*, 1918, p 6, 8).

Justin Martin, a second-century Christian writer, talks about the other similar gods to Christ present in his day:

“For you know how many sons your esteemed writers ascribed to Jupiter: Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Aesculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus, too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus” (*The First Apology of Justin*, Chapter XXI).

In fact, disturbed by the similarities of Christ with the other pagan gods, Justin explains:

“and we proceed to demonstrate that they (the pagans) have been uttered by the influence of the wicked demons, to deceive and lead astray the human race. For having heard it proclaimed through the prophets that the Christ was to come, and that the ungodly among men were to be punished by fire, they (the demons) put forward many to be called sons of Jupiter, under the impression that they would be able to produce in men the idea that the things which were said with regard to Christ were mere marvellous tales, like the things which were said by the poets” (Ibid, Chapter LIV).

In other words, he explains that the demons had influenced the pagans before Christianity and taught them the idea of God having a son. They (the demons) did this so that when Christianity was born, the pagans could claim that the Christians had copied them! When in truth, this is exactly what happened; the Christians have copied the pagans in elevating Jesus to the level of God Himself.

For the sake of argument, if we accept that Jesus was the literal son of God, then we have to question exactly what their relationship was. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah analyses the relationship in detail in his book '*Christianity, A Journey from Facts to Fiction*'. The reader is recommended to read the book further for a deeper analysis, but let's look at one point, he writes:

“If God is the father then that presents several options. One, God also has the same chromosomes that humans have, in which case these must have been transferred somehow to the uterus of Mary. That is unbelievable and unacceptable, if God has the chromosomes of human beings He no longer remains God. So as a consequence of belief in Jesus as the literal ‘Son’ of God, even the divinity of the Father is jeopardised.

The second possibility is that God created the extra chromosomes as a supernatural phenomenon of creation. In other words, they did not actually belong to the person of God, but were created miraculously. This would automatically lead us to reject Jesus' relationship to God as one of child to father, and would result in the all embracing relationship of the Universe to God, that is, the relationship of every created being to its Creator.” (p.9)

[103] For some reason, the Gospel of Mark has Jesus silencing the Demons, in that he doesn't want them to reveal his 'true' identity, i.e. that he was the Son of God. No real explanation is given by our author, and scholars have long debated the reason; it's been referred to as the *Messianic Secret of Mark*.

Some argue that if the expulsions are to be interpreted literally, it is possible that the patients, in the moment of tension, might give an unintelligible cry, which in turn may have been heard by witnesses who reported it to others, and as the years went by, the unintelligible cries of the patients may have turned into proclamations of Jesus' divinity. This was then heard by the author Mark who wrote it in his gospel.

Others have interpreted the secret to be a creation of the Church for a different reason: The Church preached that Jesus was divine and the son of god. But earlier sources and reports do not depict Jesus telling anyone this (probably because he never did claim to be divine and the literal son of God). So to bring the two conflicting facts together the Messianic Secret was created, that Jesus silenced everyone who bore witness to his *true* identity.

Still others have come to the conclusion that Jesus perhaps did not do as many miracles as the gospels depict, and for this reason not many people believed in him. To overcome this problem, the Church invented the secret, so that it could be argued that those who did witness his miracles told no one.

Lastly and most likely, that the Jewish people eagerly awaited the coming of the Messiah; perhaps the man began to cry out in hope that Jesus was this Messiah. Jesus himself

had not declared himself as such yet, and thus he may have silenced the man. Claiming to be the Messiah would have had huge implications, and was the main reason Jesus was arrested. Jesus knew this, and if rumours were being spread about him being the Messiah, this would have led to his early arrest and thereby hindered his mission a great deal.

[104] The **appointment of twelve** here seems symbolical, probably referring to the twelve tribes of Israel, that being the tribes/sons of Prophet Jacob. The strict Jewish sect Essenes also had a similar practice, where their Council consisted of *twelve men* (Dead Sea Scrolls, The Community Rule, 1QS, 8:1). Also Paul, *after* the betrayal of Jesus by Judas speaks of Jesus appearing to the *twelve* following his 'resurrection' (1 Corinthians 15:5). Did Paul not know about Judas and still count him as a disciple *after* Jesus' resurrection? Clearly he wasn't a disciple after he betrayed Jesus! Either that, or he made a bit of a blunder and forgot. Or, most likely he too understood it as symbolical.

Our author Mark may have heard about the traditions regarding the twelve apostles of Jesus and thus may have sought twelve names to complete this tradition. Yet, Luke speaks of *great crowds of his disciples* in 6:17, and later another *seventy disciples* in 10:1 seem to be hanging around. Jesus would no doubt have had more than twelve disciples; it may be that some ranked higher than others and these may have later been referred to as the twelve.

[105] This is the same **Simon** whom Jesus met at the Sea of Galilee in Mark 1:16. Mark does not give the reason why Simon's name was changed to Peter. Matthew however, records that Jesus calls him the rock (Petros) upon which the Church shall be built upon (16:18). For a fuller description of Peter, see under Mark 1:16.

[106] For more details of **James**, see under Mark 1:19.

[107] For more details of **John**, see under Mark 1:19.

[108] For a more details of **Andrew**, see under Mark 1:16.

[109] For a more details of **Philip**, see under John 1:43.

[110] Next to nothing is known of the apostle **Bartholomew**, as he is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament. Some have thought that he and Nathanael in the Gospel of John are one and the same person. Tradition has it that he travelled to India with Thomas and preached there. He, too, is said to have been martyred, but little detail can be found.

[111] This is supposedly the author **Matthew**, said to be the author of the first gospel. However, as argued in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, this attribution is unlikely to be true.

[112] The apostle **Thomas** plays a minor role in the Synoptic (first three) gospels but in John's Gospel he has become well known as *doubting Thomas* who refuses to believe in the 'resurrection' of Jesus. A gospel is attributed to Thomas, which was a recently discovered gospel near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. It was written in the Coptic language and comprises of 114 sayings (like hadith) of Jesus, many of which resemble the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic (first three) gospels. It is believed to have been written between 60 CE and 140 CE. It was initially attributed to a group of heretic Christians known as the Gnostics, but this attribution has been challenged by more recent scholars. I would argue that this gospel contains more of the original teachings of Jesus than the four canonical gospels (especially John). Finally, Thomas is said to have travelled to India to preach there, and died a martyr's death under a local prince.

[113] Very little information about **James son of Alphaeus** is available. Perhaps he was the brother of Levi, but that is all that is known. He is reported to have been stoned to death.

[114] Little is known of **Thaddaeus**; he is said to have gone to Edessa to cure King Abgar V and founded a church there.

[115] **Simon the Canaanite** or Zealot (Luke 6:15) was a member of the Jewish revolutionary anti-Roman movement; the Zealots. It is unlikely that he remained a Zealot after meeting Jesus though. The term Zealot was used to describe the revolutionary nationalists, who were united in their *zeal* of the Law, for an independent Jewish state; similar to rebels who fought against British occupation in India or any other nationalists against occupation from a foreign empire.

[116] **Judas Iscariot** is mentioned among the twelve, even though he betrays Jesus afterwards. The significance of his surname, Iscariot, is uncertain; some say it is *man of Kerioth* which would make him of Judean origin, although a derivation of his name, Sicarius, 'dagger man' would link him to the Zealots. He is said to have committed suicide by hanging himself (Matthew 27:5), or he falls and his 'bowels gush out' (Acts 1:18).

[117] Important Words

οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (*oi par autou*) - literally *those from him*, which the WEB translates as *his friends*, while the RSV translates as *his family* which is most likely more of an interpretation (a correct in my opinion) of the text than a direct translation.

[118] With the mass healings and popularity of Jesus, crowds swamp him, so much so that his **family** has to intervene. They go out and seize him and think him to be insane. That is according to our author Mark. Is this really true though? Are we to think that Mary the mother of Jesus, to whom the angel visited and assured her that she carried the Messiah and son of God thought that this same son was **insane**? Does it also include James the brother of Jesus, who headed the Jerusalem Church after Jesus? Some of the statements written by our author beggars belief!

A possible reason (and Allah knows best) might be that our author is attacking the Jerusalem Church and the Petrine. Recall that the gospel writer Mark was a Pauline Christian, in that he was a close follower of Paul and not of Peter (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book), the latter belonging to the Jerusalem Church. Mark is attacking the leadership of the Petrine; hence the fact that Matthew (a Petrine Christian) omitted the whole event, along with Luke who also removed it as he thought it was too harsh and direct.

The only other possibility, which is linked to the above is that the tradition was made up by the early Pauline Church and Mark, belonging to that Church heard it and wrote it in his gospel.

[119] The first mention of **Beelzebul** is made in 2 Kings 1:2, as the god of Ekron; one of the five chief cities of the Philistines. Beelzebul (meaning *lord of the flies*) is a deliberate biblical corruption of the original name of the pagan god *Baal Zabul* (*Baal the Prince*). The Pharisees are accusing Jesus of being possessed by Baal. The charge and accusation is serious, since according to the Torah, mediums and wizards are to be put to death: "A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 20:27). Although the above charge is not raised against Jesus in any of his trials, yet it is still serious enough for Jesus to refute it harshly.

[120] How can he cast out demons with the power of a demon? Not just any demon at that, but Beelzebul! The idea that such a demon existed in the time of Jesus is supported by the existence of a demon of the same name in the Testament of Solomon, which was written between the first and fifth centuries CE. According to this text, the demon Orniyas interfered with the building of the First Temple, and when confronted with Solomon, the demon is forced to bring the ruler of demons into Solomon's presence. When the demon appears, Solomon asks him who he is and the demon replies, "I am Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons" (Testament of Solomon 13).

This may have instigated the scribes to accuse Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebul, the one who controlled all other demons, and as such was able to cast them out. If Jesus was possessed or had the power of Beelzebul, how or why would he cast out other demons? The conflict of interest itself refutes the accusation. Such an allegation is often raised against all Prophets of God:

"...and they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: 'This is a sorcerer and a liar.'" (Holy Quran 38:5).

[121] With regards to the parable of the **strong man**; the latter is most likely to be Satan himself, and the one binding him would be Jesus. The readers may recall the story of Tobit, a righteous Israelite living in Nineveh, who is said to have married a woman who was possessed by a demon; every unfortunate man who married her died as a result of the demon. Tobit, hearing of this, marries the woman and exorcises the demon. The demon flees to the remotest parts of Egypt, where an angel goes after it and *binds* it (Book of Tobit 8:1-3).

A parallel saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is also worth mentioning: "Abu Huraira reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: A highly wicked one amongst the Jinn escaped yester night to interrupt my prayer, but Allah gave me power over him, so I seized him and intended to tie him to one of the pillars of the mosque in order that you, all together or all, might look at him, but I remembered the supplication of my brother Sulaiman: ' My Lord, forgive me, give me such a kingdom as will not be possible for anyone after me'" (Quran, 37:36) (Sahih Muslim, Book 004, Number 1104).

The demons or Jinn in the above may well refer to evil powers, in any shape or form, which when confronted by prophets and righteous people stand little chance. Instead of overpowering their victims, the evil forces are themselves overpowered and bound, i.e. made completely harmless. Please note though, that Islam does not agree with demons portrayed in the bible, see notes [Mark 1:26](#) for details.

[122] Important Words

The Greek for the phrase **sons of men** is υἱοὶ ἀνθρώπων (*yiōis anthropōwn*), which is translated by the WEB as *descendants of man*, which is more of an interpretation rather than a literal translation, since ἀνθρώπων (*anthropōwn*) means *man* and is in the plural number. I have opted for the above agreeing with the RSV. It is uncertain why the WEB didn't literally translate it, perhaps wanting to avoid confusion since Jesus calls himself the *son of man*, which the translators wanted to differentiate from men in general.

[123] After Jesus refutes the absurd claims of the scribes that he is demon-possessed, he explains further that all sins of mankind will be forgiven. But he who **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit**, he will never be forgiven. Jesus being possessed by the power of God is accused of being possessed by the power of demons and false gods. Being a prophet of God, Jesus was extremely jealous and protective of his Lord, and makes a radical and powerful statement; that they may malign Jesus himself, but not the revelation he received from God which is delivered to Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

[124] For some Christians, and Muslims for that matter, it might seem quite new and rather odd that Jesus had brothers. He did, and sisters! See notes under [Matthew 13:55](#) for details.

[125] This passage about Jesus' harsh tone against his own family is very controversial. The beginning of the Gospel of Luke talks very highly of Jesus' mother, not only that, but the importance and piety of James, the brother of Jesus, is well known in Church history (for a fuller description of James, see under [Mark 6:3](#)). Thus it is likely that this passage was created by the early Church as a lesson for Christians: That complete devotion to God and the Church is required, even if it meant cutting ties with one's family and friends.

The Holy Quran opposes the above view of Jesus, when it quotes Jesus saying: "And HE (God) has made me dutiful towards my mother, and has not made me arrogant and graceless;" (19:33). Such the image of the true Jesus, not the one portrayed in the gospels.

[126] For the interpretation of the above parable, see under [Mark 4:13-20](#) below, where Jesus himself provides the interpretation.

[127] Verse 12 is actually a quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10. Why Jesus quotes this is uncertain, to read it as it is, it would seem that the reason why Jesus spoke in parables was to *hide certain aspects of his teachings from the general public* and only disclose its entirety to the inner circle of disciples. It is not surprising therefore that this passage caused numerous problems in interpretation since it implied that God has predestined many people to hell, by not allowing them to *perceive* the true teachings.

However, the reason may be Jesus' audience, comprising of both Jews and Gentiles; the Jews were accustomed to hearing parables and were very likely to understand them. Not really the case with Gentiles. A very similar parable exists in the apocryphal book of 4 Ezra: "For as the husbandman soweth much seed upon the ground, and planteth many trees, and yet the thing that is sown good in his season cometh not up, neither doth all that is planted take root: even so is it of them that are sown in the world; they shall not all be saved" (8:41). Such parables may have already been familiar to Jews, but not to Gentiles. Since Jesus was primarily sent as a prophet to the Jews, his message was for them and he cared little for the Gentiles and this may have been a method to effectively preach to the Jews without the Gentiles (particularly the Gentile authorities) knowing his teachings.

Another possible explanation of Jesus speaking in parables is that he was informing and explaining certain parables/teachings and sharing some of his revelations to the elect of his community, which were not to be disclosed to the general public as the latter may not have been ready, or would likely misunderstand the revelations. The elect of his community would be as the name suggests; those members of his community who were particularly close to God and Jesus, i.e. the leaders of his community.

If the above two interpretations are to be rejected, the *only* other alternative is to believe the Gospel of Mark; that Jesus hid most of his teachings or at least only provided guidance to those who could understand. Those who could not understand, for whatever reason, were left without guidance and damned to hell. Either way, the good news did not reach the majority of his listeners, even though they came to listen to him. At face value, this is what our gospel writer Mark is implying.

Readers are recommended to check the Gospel of Matthew's version of the above account, recorded in Matthew 13:10-16, where the blame is shifted to the people rather than Jesus. This makes far more sense.

[128] The dullness of the disciples is frequently highlighted in the Gospel of Mark (4:40; 9:32; 8:17; 6:52). Reading all these references, we have to ask, were they that stupid? Did Jesus choose a bunch of simpletons to become his disciples to whom he would leave the guidance of the rest of the Jews? Some Christian interpreters have argued that Jesus would have done so intentionally, to show the public or future readers of the gospel that he managed to take some dull Jews and transform them into magnificent leaders with his teachings and guidance.

I do not agree, as Muslims we believe that Jesus and prophets for that matter chose the best of the people to be their disciples. In fact, it would have to have been the best of

the Jews to accept the true teachings of the Prophet of God. The disciples of Jesus were no different. So why does our author Mark portray them as so dull-witted?

The answer may be due to the type of Christian our author is, he is a Pauline Christian (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more details), but basically Mark was a close follower of Paul, who was at odds with the original followers of Jesus. The original followers of Jesus' message were drastically different and one of the best ways to convince future Christians that Paul's message and Church were correct rather than the original disciples is to mock the latter and show how dull they were.

[129] Earlier in Mark (4: 1-9), Jesus spoke of the parable of the Sower. The disciples then ask about *the parables* (more than one) in verse 10, to which Jesus gives a general response about parables in verses 11-12. In verse 13 above, however, he responds as if they only inquired about the parable of the sower. This is most likely due to Mark's combining of the two traditions; the parable and its interpretation, and the parable theory in verses 11-12.

The sower is either Jesus, or prophets in general or perhaps God Himself. They sow the *λογος* (*logos*) or *word*, which is often used in the gospels to refer to the teachings of God (Mark 2:2; Luke 5:1; John 10:35).

What follows in the parable are descriptions of certain types of people and how they respond to the word/teachings of Jesus and God. Verse 15 describes those who receive the teachings but then are pulled away by Satan or Satanic forces. In Jesus' time, it would most likely refer to his opponents; the Pharisees and the scribes who follow up the people who hear Jesus' teachings and then convince them otherwise.

[130] Those described in verses 16 and 17 are people who readily accept the teachings of Jesus, but do not fully understand them; thus they are not entirely convinced by the teachings and when faced with some sort of social pressure to give them up, do so easily. These people may have accepted the message of Jesus for all the wrong reasons, blindly following through marriage or peer pressure etc. Their faith has no root and when pressured or tested they fall and break away. The concept of having a strong root representing strong faith would have been familiar to Jewish people in the audience (Jer 17:8). The mention of persecution again alludes to a time when the followers of Jesus were persecuted themselves; only after Jesus was condemned as a criminal and placed on the cross. This may well imply that the above saying might have been a post-crucifixion saying of Jesus.

[131] Verses 18-19 would refer to the rich or materialistic people; those who are attached to this age or world. The message and teachings of all prophets emphasise the giving to the poor and the sharing of wealth, along with viewing the hereafter as the real life. Often those who are materialistic and attached to the world may accept the teachings of prophets, but when their teachings begin to really dawn on them, when the teachings about giving much of their wealth to the poor are heard, they often defect and fall victim to the allures of the world. Again, the imagery of thorns and thistles was a common Jewish image of disaster (Gen 3:18).

[132] Much like the parable itself, the interpretation ends on a good note. Even though many of the seeds do not produce anything and are wasted, some do fall on good land or soil and produce fruit and these are interpreted as being those people who are genuine and accept the teachings of God wholeheartedly. It is this group that appears lowly and insignificant, but gradually grows into a strong and powerful community, carrying out the commandments of God and spreading the prophet's message.

[133] Important Words

μετρεῖτε (*metreíte*)– verb present active indicative 2nd plural of μετρώ (*metrew*) meaning: *measure, to take the dimensions of, measure, apportion out, measure out, give out* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the word as *measure*, which is correct, but for simplicity sake, I have opted for *give*

(agreeing with the RSV translation), which has the same meaning in the above context.

[134] The saying is primarily to do with judgement; the **measure** one gives will be the measure they get; in other words, whatever good deeds one does, they will be rewarded accordingly. Verse 25 seems to refer back to the insiders and outsiders spoken of in verses 11 and 12. Those who have the secret of the kingdom take it and proclaim it, and thus benefit from its rewards, while those who do not have it, lose out completely.

[135] Following on from the previous parable of the Sower, the kingdom of God is likened to a man who **casts his seed**, which grows without the knowledge of the man. It grows slowly but eventually springs up and yields fruit. The man in the parable would refer to a prophet, and perhaps preachers in general, who cast their seed (teachings) on the land, and are not responsible for it, nor will they know how people will respond to the message. They are but responsible for the plain delivery of the message (Holy Quran 16:36). The secret of how the people will respond is known only to God, much like the miraculous nature of how seeds grow without the knowledge of man who sows them. The parable further stresses the importance of total reliance on God. It ends with the sickle, reference to Joel 3:13 is made here, indicating that the harvest (people) are now prepared to be judged by God.

[136] The parables of seeds and sowing continue in the gospels. This time, the kingdom of God is likened to the **mustard seed**; the seed itself may not be the smallest in the world, but its diameter is little more than a millimetre making it a noticeably small seed. It grows to about two or three metres tall, and whilst not being a very large tree it does become a very large plant or **herb**. Thus the contrast of the original size of the seed compared to the end result is presented.

What has this all got to do with the kingdom of God, and why is this small seed likened to it? That the kingdom of God be likened to a large tree is understandable, in Ezek 17:22-24 the future kingdom is likened to the cedar which is much larger than the mustard plant. Thus the parable focuses more on the tiny and insignificant mustard seed, which may imply that the kingdom of God is ushered in not by heavenly armies and angels, but rather on a smaller scale, by Jesus and his few disciples; not by battles and victories against the Roman armies, but rather by the healings and exorcisms of the disciples of Jesus. It will be through these small powers that will lead to a creation of a large community, in which people will join and live, much like the birds live in the mustard plant in the parable.

[137] As mentioned in Mark 4:10-12, it seems that according to Mark, Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds in order that they may not understand his message, or he was selective on who should understand. Verse 34 seems to make the fact even more explicit, in that he never spoke to outsiders (the general public) normally, but always in parables.

However, this is not entirely true, since he instructs the crowds on numerous occasions without parables; the Sermon on the Mount, or the numerous instances of him preaching in synagogues illustrate that either verse 34 is an exaggeration or it reflects a certain stage in Jesus' life where he did hide his message from outsiders, only to explain them later to his disciples.

[138] Whilst sailing to the other side, a great storm swells and threatens the very lives of the disciples. The description of Jesus sleeping while the boat battles a great storm is reminiscent of ancient stories, where one who has absolute authority is able to sleep calmly in such situations since his authority was unquestioned (Bernard F. Batto, *The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty*, 1987, p.153-77).

[139] There are numerous possible interpretations of the above narrative. The first and simplest is that the above actually happened as our author Mark writes; that it may well have been another miracle of Jesus. As already explained in The Introduction to Jesus, he may have performed events or acts which defy science as we know it now. The miracle

described here does seem to strengthen the faith of the disciples and thus served a strong purpose.

The other possibility is that the whole event was actually created by either the author Mark or by one of his sources; the rebuking of the storm by Jesus does resemble his rebuking of demons in many exorcisms. Many scholars have in fact brought to light numerous similarities of the above with demon exorcism, along with other older stories of demons, particularly demons of the wind and sea (Collins, *Mark: a Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.261). For example in the Testament of Solomon, a book written after the first century CE, gives advice and spells against demons; it describes a dialogue between Solomon and *a cruel spirit of the sea* which was in the form of a horse and fish; the horse in the front and a fish in the back. It would often raise itself on waves and crash against ships. He gives his name as Poseidon (Chapter 16). Thus the author may have wished to show Jesus having power over all types of demons and evil spirits.

Another possible interpretation could be that the event was a vision, which was being experienced by the disciples of Jesus. As already shown above, the violent wind and sea at times can refer to demons, some even taking on the name of Greek gods. The vision of Jesus may show the power of Jesus and God, showing that the latter will overcome the pagan gods. Similar miracles are reported in many lives of prophets. It was during the Prophethood of the Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that a large party of people saw the moon being split asunder (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 208). Whether this happened literally is unknown, since some have argued that such a grand event as the moon being split in two should have been noticed by other nations and astronomers, but no record exists, for such interpreters this was probably a vision, which meant that the moon (which the Arabs understood to be a King or represented the Kingdom of the Arabs) was being torn apart; that the Kingdom of the Arabs would fall apart and cease to exist in due time.

Finally, the wind and storm in the vision may have yet another explanation. In the Quran the story of Prophet Solomon is recorded; who has the wind subjected to him. Again, this is not to be taken literally, but the Arabic word used ريح (*reeha*) also means *predominance and power victory* or *aid against an enemy* (Lane). Thus the above vision of Jesus, which may have been shared by his disciples, may have been a sign of Jesus' power against the enemy.

The above interpretation is supported by contemporary writings such as the Dead Sea Scrolls: "He rebukes the sea and dries it up; its interpretation: the sea is all the Kittim who are... to execute judgement against them and destroy them from the face of the earth, together with all their commanders whose dominion shall be finished" (Commentary on Naham, 4Q169). The Kittim are the enemies of the Essenes; the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, who likened them to the sea just like Jesus may have done above.

[140] This is the first time Jesus performs a miracle on such a scale in the Gospel of Mark, and as a result the disciples are baffled and overcome with awe; they still have not figured out exactly who Jesus is though. It is noteworthy that this is the second time Jesus rebukes his disciples in Mark: the first being in verse 13 of the same chapter, and this will be a general trend in this gospel.

[141] After stilling the storm, Jesus then (rather amazingly) lands at **Gerasenes**, which is not by the sea but rather around thirty miles south east of it! Even the surrounding district could not have reached the shores of the Lake (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p.263). If Jesus was in Gerasenes, then he would have had to trek for a day or two to reach there from getting off the boat.

[142] Mark then proceeds to talk about a certain man possessed by a demon; he is described as a wild man, being tormented by a certain **impure spirit**. The spirit has such control over him, that no one is able to control the man. The spirit seems to give the man superhuman strength, such that he is able to break chains! However, it is more likely that the man was suffering from some sort of illness; its effects being exaggerated somewhat by the author Mark.

[143] Important Words

προσεκύνησεν (*prosekunaysen*) – Verb, aorist active indicative, 3rd person singular of προσκυνέω (*prosekuneow*); meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

Commentary

The fact that the man is able to recognise the noble features of Jesus and run to him, and even bow down before him shows that he was likely suffering from some sort of disease or illness which prevented him from mingling with the townsmen; perhaps the man had a severe case of depression which caused him to live in seclusion and may explain the continuous crying, moaning and self-harm.

[144] The man went on his knees and begged Jesus for help, most probably asking to be cured of his illness and not to be tormented by it anymore. The crying out of the **demon** is likely to be the words of the author himself, as the first part of the phrase **I adjure you by God** has parallels in the Magical Papyri as shown by J. M. Hull. Hecate is adjured in a love spell, "I swear to you by the great name of Blathanna" (PGM XXXVI.189). For more details on demon-possession, see under Mark 1:26.

[145] As already explained under Mark 1:26, enquiring for the name of a demon again was a typical strategy of exorcism in the Magical Papyri. All these 'exorcisms' performed by Jesus were modelled on past and current trends. All are basically nonsense and Jesus never did anything of the sort. The name implies that there were a vast number of demons in the man; a **legion** being a Roman army of about 6,000 soldiers.

[146] The area where Jesus had landed was not Jewish as indicated by the **herd of pigs** which was probably the livelihood of the inhabitants of that land.

[147] The spirit leaves the man and enters into the herd of swine, which rush off and die in the sea. However, as noted above, Gerasenes is about thirty miles south east of the Sea of Galilee. Thus the demon Legion would have made the swine run a marathon to the sea in order to plunge into it and drown themselves. Pigs do not run very fast either (about 11 mph) which would require Jesus and his disciples to wait about three hours to witness the miracle, that is if they followed to see where the pigs were heading off to. The story does not give much credit to the demon's intelligence either; after seeking permission to enter a herd of pigs, it then decides to have the pigs run off and commit suicide!

For all the above reasons, it is unlikely the above is historically correct; however it is typical of ancient exorcisms, where the exorcist casts out the demon and some sort of sign is shown to the onlookers to show that the exorcism is complete. Josephus describes a similar exorcism:

"He put a ring that had a root on one of those spots mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demonic, after which he drew out the demon from his nostrils; when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazer would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, translated by William Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2001, 8:48-49).

Apollonius of Tyana also performed a similar exorcism whilst teaching the crowds. There was a youth in the crowd who laughed at everything and cursed a lot and realising he was possessed by a demon;

“Apollonius stared at him and the phantom started uttering sounds of fear and rage, like those who are burnt and tortured. And the phantom promised to leave the youth alone and never take possession of people again. But speaking with anger like a master to a slave who is unstable, mischievous, shameless, and so forth, (Apollonius) ordered him to depart and to provide proof. (The demon) said: ‘I will knock down that statue,’ pointing to one of those on the royal porch. When the statue first shook and then fell, there was more commotion and applause at the marvel than anyone could write about” (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.20).

If Mark did want Jesus to demonstrate his power, then the demonstration of the demon going into a herd of swine is a magnificent one. There is an alternative interpretation; that the above did not happen literally, but was maybe a vision and thus can be interpreted figuratively. The swine could refer to the pagans (Jesus himself refers to the pagans as swine in Matthew 7:6), and Jesus thus banishes them into the sea, symbolically the abyss or the underworld. The name of the demon may also symbolise the Romans. Jesus removes these spirits and then destroys them along with the swine, i.e. the pagans.

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) had serious concerns about the entire incident. He lists a number of reasons questioning the authenticity of the account, ending with:

“How superstitious and stupid does this passage seem! We are told that the evil spirits wanted to leave to quit the body of man and enter into the swine. A further question is: This herd of swine must have been somebody’s property and what right did Jesus have to destroy another man’s property?” (*Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran*, 1985, p.62)

[148] The herdsmen who looked after the swine saw the event and reported it back to the village. They came to investigate and saw the mad man cured **sitting** by Jesus. Why were they afraid? Perhaps they feared Jesus, as he had control over the mad man, whom they could not control themselves. Or maybe they saw the insane man with Jesus and were wary of approaching them. For whatever reason, they asked Jesus to leave them alone, which he did without preaching or uttering anything.

[149] Whilst climbing into the boat (even though the sea was thirty miles away) the cured man asks Jesus to follow him, to become his disciple. However, Jesus refused him; instead telling him to **go back home and tell his friends** and family about him being cured. The reason why Jesus refused him can only be due to him being a Gentile. Jesus has no concerns with Gentiles, i.e. non-Jews.

[150] **Decapolis** was the area in the North Transjordan, consisting of *ten cities* of heavily Hellenistic character; the area was outside the traditional boundaries of the land of Israel.

[151] After departing from the territory of Gadarenes, Jesus then lands on another side of the sea, where a large crowd gather around him. The narrative which follows has long been agreed upon by scholars to actually contain two separate healing stories, which were woven together by the author Mark. A strong indication and support for the theory is that the first story about the woman is actually written in the aorist (past) tense, whilst the healing of the ruler’s daughter is told in the present tense (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.276). Unfortunately most translations of the Bible, including the WEB and RSV which we are using do not show this very well. I’ve modified the translations to show it however.

[152]

The faith displayed by **Jairus** is similar to that of the centurion whose son was ill, recorded in the other gospels (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10 and even John 4:46-54). Both men had complete faith in Jesus’s healing ability.

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[149] Whilst climbing into the boat (even though the sea was thirty miles away) the cured man asks Jesus to follow him, to become his disciple. However, Jesus refused him; instead telling him to **go back home and tell his friends** and family about him being cured. The reason why Jesus refused him can only be due to him being a Gentile. Jesus has no concerns with Gentiles, i.e. non-Jews.

[150] **Decapolis** was the area in the North Transjordan, consisting of *ten cities* of heavily Hellenistic character; the area was outside the traditional boundaries of the land of Israel.

[151] After departing from the territory of Gadarenes, Jesus then lands on another side of the sea, where a large crowd gather around him. The narrative which follows has long been agreed upon by scholars to actually contain two separate healing stories, which were woven together by the author Mark. A strong indication and support for the theory is that the first story about the woman is actually written in the aorist (past) tense, whilst the healing of the ruler’s daughter is told in the present tense (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.276). Unfortunately most translations of the Bible, including the WEB and RSV which we are using do not show this very well. I’ve modified the translations to show it however.

[152]

The faith displayed by **Jairus** is similar to that of the centurion whose son was ill, recorded in the other gospels (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10 and even John 4:46-54). Both men had complete faith in Jesus’s healing ability.

[153]

The woman discussed here most was probably suffering from a haemorrhage or some other vaginal ailment.

[154] The clothes or **garments** of prophets and Jewish saints played a significant role in miracle stories. Children used to tug and pull the garments of the grandson of Honi the Circle Drawer, asking him for prayers (Talmud, bTaan 23a). Paul's handkerchief is even recorded to have healed people (Acts 19:12).

[155] Numerous reasons have been given of why the woman was so afraid to come forward; some have argued that since she was impure and unclean, and that anything she touched would also have become impure, that she may have transferred the impurity to Jesus and thus was afraid that he may react harshly. Sadly, such a tradition still exists in certain parts of the world today, where menstruating women are seen as *impure*.

However, some scholars have argued that such women were not social outcasts during this period and that the account gives no hint that she was (Sheye J.D. Cohen, *Menstruants and the Sacred in Judaism and Christianity*, in Sarah B. Pomeroy *Women's History and Ancient History*, 1991, 278-279). The most likely reason was that she took power from Jesus without his permission and was fearful that he might angrily undo the healing miracle.

[156] It should be noted that Jesus states that it was her **faith** that healed her.

[157] Whilst Jesus was talking to the woman who was bleeding, some people came from the ruler's house and informed everyone that the little girl (verse 23) had **died**, and that they should not bother Jesus anymore. But Jesus paid no attention to them and continued to go into the house; he only allowed three of his disciples to come with him, most likely not to overcrowd the house, which would have ruined his concentration for healing the girl. The other disciples may have guarded the door to prevent the crowd from entering.

Jesus himself then tells the people who weep over the girl that she is not dead, but is **asleep**. He being a healer knew the signs of death better than them, and he must have seen that she was still alive; she may have been in a coma or simply unconscious.

[158] **Important Words**

ἡγείρω (*egeirow*) – Verb, present active imperative, 2nd person singular of ἡγείρω (*egiro*): of a sleeping person - *active; wake; rouse; wake up; arouse*. Of a person lying down - *raise up; help to raise; lift up*. Also healing a person - *restore to health* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[159] As noted under verse 21, the story about the healing of the daughter is written in the present tense, the WEB translation did not show this, so I changed it to illustrate further that the above is actually two distinct stories woven into one, see notes under verse 21.

The girl was cured by Jesus, whether she rose up immediately is uncertain. Perhaps some sort of medicine was applied to her that she responded to quickly and was awake shortly after. He then instructs the parents to give her some food, as she is still very weak from her illness. The Messianic Secret comes into play here again in this passage; see under [Mark 3:12](#) for more details.

[160] Probably Nazareth.

[161] It is not entirely certain what **works** the audience were referring to, since thus far Jesus has not performed any miracles in Nazareth, nor was he able to do any there; see verse 5 below. If the people were aware of Jesus' miracles, it may have been the ones which he performed in and around the Decapolis earlier in Mark's Gospel.

[162] Textual Variant

This is the only place in the gospels where Jesus is referred to as a **carpenter**. A famous scholar on the historical Jesus explains that the Greek term used in modern terms would be better suited to a *construction worker* (Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 2005, p.202). He goes on to explain that Celsus the pagan critic of Christianity mocked the Christians about this, saying that their god was a mere *construction worker*. Origen, the Christian apologetic made it his duty to reply to the allegations raised by Celsus; not by refuting his claim, but by denying it! He states that 'Celsus is blind also to this; that in none of the gospels current in the Churches is Jesus himself ever described as being a carpenter' (Against Celsus 6:36).

Did Origen not know of the above passage? We might forgive Origen, since both Matthew and Luke (who copied the above text of Mark) modify it and call Jesus the *son* of a carpenter. However, we would still expect a famous Church Father to be familiar with the text of Mark above. Or could it be that his version of Mark did not contain the verse about Jesus being a carpenter? As it turns out, our earliest manuscript of Mark dated to the third century (P⁴⁵) states: 'Is this not the *son* of the carpenter?' What motivated the change? Which is correct? Was Jesus a carpenter/construction worker or was he the son of one? Since Christianity was attacked for the fact that Jesus was a carpenter, later scribes may well have modified the text to show that he was not, but instead he was the *son* of a carpenter.

Commentary

Jesus the **carpenter** is often a charming picture painted by many Christian interpreters, who argue for the humble and simple life Jesus had before he was commissioned to proclaim the gospel message. As shown above as well, many later Christian scribes were embarrassed and changed the text to get rid of it.

However, the term **carpenter** may not be as simple as most would interpret; a saying in the Talmud records that: "This is something that no carpenter, son of carpenters, can explain" (Talmud yYeb. 9b; yKid. 66a). Thus a carpenter signified a learned man, or scholar according to the Rabbis in the third and fourth century. Whether this was meant by the audience of Jesus in the passage above, is uncertain, but it is easily possible. The gospel writers (not being Jewish) and later Christian scribes had no idea and thought to get rid of the attribution.

[163] Jacob/James the Brother of Jesus (sometimes called the *brother of the Lord*), plays no part in the gospel narrative, with the exception of this one verse. Elsewhere, he is simply known as James, e.g. in Acts of the Apostles, where he is the head of the Jerusalem Church and presides over the council of the apostles. Paul also hints at James' superiority over the apostles when he names him the first of the three pillars of the Church, followed by Peter and John (Gal 2:9).

However, some Christians have attempted to argue that James was just Head of the Jerusalem Church but not all the Christians. Robert Eisenman, a famous scholar refutes such opinions in his book *James the Brother of Jesus*, where he argues that being Head or Bishop of the Jerusalem Church meant that he was head of the whole Christian Movement; that Jerusalem was the principal Church before the Jewish War in 70 CE; all other churches were quite insignificant in comparison (p. 20). Christian tradition also states that he was the Head of the Jerusalem Church:

"Control of the church passed to the apostles, together with the Lord's brother James, whom everyone from the Lord's time till our own had called the Righteous, for there were many James, but this one was holy from his birth; he drank no wine, or intoxicating liquor and ate no animal food, no razor came near his head; he did not smear himself with oil, and took no baths. He alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place, for his garments were not of wool but of linen. He used to enter

the Sanctuary alone, and was often found on his knees beseeching forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's from his continually bending them in worship of God and beseeching forgiveness for the people. Because of his unsurpassable righteousness he was called the Righteous" (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, published by Penguin Classics in 1965, Book 2; 23:11).

Even the Gospel of Thomas supports the above in that James was appointed the Head of the Community directly by Jesus:

"The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?" Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being" (*Gospel of Thomas*, 12).

Just to note, the Gospel of Thomas was a recently discovered gospel near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. It was written in the Coptic language and comprises of 114 sayings (like hadith) of Jesus, many of which resemble the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic (first three) gospels. It is believed to have been written between 60 CE and 140 CE. It was initially attributed to a group of heretic Christians known as the Gnostics, but this attribution has been challenged by more recent scholars. I would argue that this gospel contains more of the original teachings of Jesus than the four canonical gospels (especially John).

Being such a prominent figure after the departure of Jesus, how is it that he is hardly mentioned in the gospels? He is basically the Caliph of Jesus, his successor. Why don't we hear about him in the gospels? This may again be due to the position of our author Mark, who was a Pauline Christian, i.e. a follower of Paul. The latter did not get along with James (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book). The omission of James in the Gospel of Mark therefore might be intentional. Our author probably felt there was no need to speak of James in his gospel, he was after all the opponent of Paul.

It may be worth mentioning that James was a follower of the Torah Law and abided by it very strictly, he writes:

"If you really fulfil the royal Law, according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole Law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become a transgressor of the Law. So speak and act as those who are to be judged under the Law of liberty" (James 2:8-12).

Thus the Head of the Church after Jesus, according to some traditions being appointed by Jesus himself, was a firm believer of the Jewish Law; a tradition and stance which is not shared by the majority of Christians today.

[164] Jude (or Judah) was one of the four brothers of Jesus; James is the most famous but the other two, Josés and Simon, are completely unknown. There exists a letter in the New Testament which is attributed to Jude. Other than that, little else is known of Jude.

[165] Why the people took offence is uncertain. What was there to take offence at? Maybe something Jesus was teaching?

[166] This is yet another example of the Pauline stance of Mark; not only does he rarely mention James and the family, but also argues that they all disbelieved in him during his ministry. The narrative presented by these gospel writers is that James disbelieved in Jesus during his ministry, but once the latter 'resurrected', then all of a sudden James is made head of the entire Church and in charge of the disciples who followed and obeyed Jesus while the latter was alive. Are we really to believe such an account?

Jesus may well have spoken the above words, but it cannot have been in the situation of the above. For the scholarly readers, the above *Sitz im Leben* created by our author Mark cannot be accepted for the above reasons. The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad spoke of the above verse as occurring after Jesus survived the cross ordeal, he writes::

“Then, since he (Jesus) had many enemies in his own land—enemies who were thirsty for his blood—and since he had already stated that ‘a Prophet is not without honour but in his own country,’ alluding to his migration, Jesus (as) decided to leave his homeland.” (*Mulfuzat*, Vol II, published in 2019, p.51)

Therefore, Jesus may have said it when leaving his home country for the lands of the east, looking back sadly as he left, since he was rejected by most of his own people.

[167] The very fact that Jesus **could do no mighty work** there because of their disbelief tells us a great deal of what kind of **work** Jesus used to do in other places around Galilee and that faith plays a very important role. It shows that Jesus may not have been a magician who healed and exorcised people in a random fashion. Rather that their believing him was crucial to their cures, thus further indicating that he spiritually cured people, as only in such cases can people get healed. There may have been some physical cures, but the majority would have been in the spiritual sense.

[168] This passage is about Jesus sending out his disciples to different parts of the country to preach his message. We’re not certain of what message they preached; did they preach that the Messiah has come? No, since Jesus has not claimed to be the Messiah yet. Later in Chapter 8 Jesus even asks the disciples who the people think he is (Mark 8:27). Therefore, the message most likely would be the message of repentance and the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15).

[169] Jesus was either referring to the custom of wearing an inner and outer coat, or more likely forbidding his disciples from taking a spare coat.

[170]

The instruction of staying with one family while they visited a city does not make much sense in the context explained above. The average Jewish household would not welcome a stranger, let alone a Jewish Christian to their house to share food so that they may preach the message of Jesus. It is likely that by the time the Gospel of Mark was written, it was already the custom of the Church to accept travelling missionaries and prepare them for their on-going journey (1 Corinthians 16:6, Romans 15:24). With this in mind, the above commissioning is most likely to have happened much later in Jesus’ ministry, when he had claimed to be the Messiah, and had a large following outside in different towns and cities. The commissioning may even have been after the crucifixion. The disciples are instructed to rely completely on God; they are ordered not to carry any provisions, but only a staff which would have been used for self defence against wild animals and maybe robbers.

The **shaking off the dust** from the sandals points to an old Jewish custom: whenever the Jews would enter into a Jewish state from a Gentile state, they would shake the dust from their clothing and shoes as they considered Gentiles to be unclean.

[171] The narrative begins with the disciples going out and proclaiming that people should repent. They also heal numerous people; the use of **oil** is new to the gospel accounts, and perhaps shows that the healing was not only performed through miracles, but perhaps through medical methods as well.

[172]

Herod Antipas was the second son of Herod the Great; he ruled over Galilee and Peraea and was given the title Tetrarch (a title for a ruler who ruled a fourth part of a territory) from 4 BCE to 39 CE. He was married to the daughter of the King of the Nabateans (9 BCE – 40 CE) which had political motives as it protected his lands in Peraea from the Arabs. However, things began going wrong when Antipas fell in love with Herodias; the wife of his half-brother in Rome. He planned to divorce his Nabatean wife, but after finding out his plans, she fled to her father who later declared war on Antipas for humiliating his daughter. Antipas was finally undone after being accused of treason, and was exiled

where he died, possibly put to death by the emperor. This is the same Herod who supposedly had John the Baptist put to death, for further details see under [Mark 6:17-29](#).

[173] Important Words

The WEB adds three further words at the end of the verse: *from the dead*. These words seem to be present in the Received Text from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, they are absent from more modern Bible editions such as the RSV. Hence I have omitted them.

Commentary

Jesus' fame spreads to such a degree that **Herod** Antipas hears reports of him. He believes that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. This is not like the raising of the dead, like that of Lazarus in John's Gospel (Chapter 11), but rather the idea that when an extremely pious or evil man died, he often came back to the world through another person and was given extraordinary powers. John the Baptist performed no miracles according to the gospels, but the opinion of numerous people, including Antipas, was that he returned as Jesus who did perform miracles.

[174]

The king wished to marry his sister-in-law, but this desire resulted in fierce criticism by John the Baptist, who considered it unlawful according to Lev 18:16.

[175] Important Words

The WEB translation which is based on the Received text, from which the KJV is based reads: "When he heard him, *he did many things*, and he heard him gladly". However, more modern editions of the Bible such as the Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[176] The above passage shifts the blame of the murder of John the Baptist from Herod to **Herodias**, who had a grudge against him. Verse 20 explains why: Herod feared John and heard him gladly, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man; there could be a chance that Herod would listen to him and end up divorcing his wife.

An opportunity arose on the birthday feast of Herod; the daughter of Herodias came in and danced in front of the king and his guests. The girl was most likely the daughter of Herodias, with her first husband, whose name was Salome according to Josephus Antiquities (18.5.4) and was most likely a teenager when she danced at the banquet. The statement in verse 22 that the girl **danced** and pleased the crowd is said to be a mild way of stating the way she danced and how she pleased her guests. One scholar states that the dance had sexual motives involved (Gerd Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 2004, p.93) and other scholars have pointed out that the narrative implies that Antipas responded to the dance with incestuous pleasure. He responds well and asks her to ask for any favour to which he will comply; an act not uncommon among both Greek and Jewish kings of the past (Esther 7:2-10).

In turn, the girl leaves the king and asks her mother what she should ask. This brings the reader back to verse 21 where the opportunity arises for Herodias, who in turn tells the girl to ask for the **head** of John the Baptist. The girl returns in eagerness and goes one step further than her mother in asking the king for the head of John on a plate **right now**.

The king is upset, since he feared John and was keeping him safe, supposedly from his wife Herodias, but he now faces a predicament. He does not wish John to die, but at the same time he does not wish to be embarrassed in front of his guests and be seen as one who breaks his promises and so orders the request of the girl to be carried out.

Josephus narrates an alternative story of the murder of John:

“Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he (Antipas) did against John, that was called the Baptist. For Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of the remission of some sins only, but for the purification of the body supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence of John had over the people might put it into this power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, translated by William Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2001, 18:117-118).

As can be seen, the above is remarkably different from the gospel narrative; however, there are ways to reconcile the accounts in Josephus and Mark. John preached in Galilee, and was proving very successful, which in turn worried King Antipas, who feared the prophet, and the people who believed in him. He therefore accused him of a crime and imprisoned him, holding him there in hope that soon people would forget about him. But the last straw was when John the Baptist declared the marriage between Herod Antipas and Herodias as unlawful on the basis of the Old Testament Laws regarding marrying your brother’s wife (Lev 18:16). It was after this, that Herod Antipas murdered John.

Some interpreters, in particular Muslim ones hold that John being a prophet of God was not murdered; the basis being God’s instruction that a false prophet must be put to death as outlined in Deut 18:20. Furthermore, according to Josephus in *Antiquities* (18:119) John was imprisoned in Machaerus, which is some seventy miles south of Tiberius where Herod Antipas lived. It is argued that John was executed and his head brought back all within a very short space of time, whilst in actual fact, travelling to Machaerus and back would have taken days if not a week or two.

However, the above text makes no mention of where the feast took place. I’m inclined to the position that John was put to death, since we have two independent sources (the gospels and Josephus) who state it. It is also supported by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah, who points out the significance of his name in Arabic (Yahya):

“The fact that Yahya did not die a natural death but was killed shows yet another implication in the name, i.e. that he would die a death of a martyr and would thus live for ever in the sight of God. Says the Quran; ‘Think not of those who have been slain in the cause of Allah as dead, Nay, they are living in the presence of their Lord and are granted gifts from Him (3:170)’ Yahya is probably the only known Israelite Prophet who was actually killed as hinted in the Quran verse, ‘We have not made anyone before him of that name.’ (19:8)” (*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.390)

[177] The disciples return from the mission which Jesus commissioned them to do (Mark 6:7).

[178] The disciples return from their mission to preach to the Jews. Return to where? According to the gospels, Jesus was a wandering prophet without a home (Matthew 8:20). Yet, the above text assumes Jesus has a base, where he sent out his apostles to preach and there they returned to rest and then were dispatched again.

[179] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *and came together to him* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the

Bible.

[180] The phrase **sheep without a shepherd** is used frequently in the Old Testament regarding a people without a king (2 Chronicles 18:16 and Nahum 3:18).

[181] **Important Words**

δηνάριων (*denariown*) – noun genitive plural neuter of δηνάριον (*denarion*) meaning: *denarius, a Roman silver coin equivalent to a labour's average daily wage* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[182] After teaching the great crowds, some **five thousand men** (the author is only counting the men, which means that there were children and women there as well, so the overall number was more like ten to fifteen thousand) the disciples come to Jesus and inform him about the late hour and ask him to tell the crowds to disperse for their supper. Instead of complying with their request, Jesus tells them to feed the people, but they complain asking how they can afford to go and buy **two hundred denarii** (one denarius being a day's wage for a worker) worth of bread. In reply, Jesus asks them to find out how much food they have, and after investigating they come back to Jesus to inform him that they have just five loaves of bread and two fish, probably enough for him and his disciples alone. Without responding to their findings, Jesus orders them to get the crowd of people to sit in **large groups**. And after blessing the food, has them distribute the food to the people. The people eat to their **fill** and the disciples then play the role of a clean-up crew and collect all the remaining food - **twelve basketfuls**! This is even more than what they began with, thus showing the true miracle performed by Jesus.

The above story is very similar to the Old Testament story of Prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:42-44) where he orders twenty loaves of bread to be given to one hundred men and even mentions that much food will be left over. Prophet Elijah also performs a similar miracle, where he, a widow and her household eat for many days from a jar of meal which never seemed to decrease (1 Kings 17:12-16).

A similar miracle is also attributed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Abu Talha said to Um Sulaim, "I have noticed feebleness in the voice of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) which I think, is caused by hunger. Have you got any food?" She said, "Yes." She brought out some loaves of barley and took out a veil belonging to her, and wrapped the bread in part of it and put it under my arm and wrapped part of the veil round me and sent me to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). I went carrying it and found Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) in the Mosque sitting with some people. When I stood there, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked, "Has Abu Talha sent you?" I said, "Yes". He asked, "With some food?" I said, "Yes" Allah's Apostle then said to the men around him, "Get up!" He set out (accompanied by them) and I went ahead of them till I reached Abu Talha and told him (of the Prophet's visit). Abu Talha said, "O Um Sulaim! Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is coming with the people and we have no food to feed them." She said, "Allah and His Apostle know better." So Abu Talha went out to receive Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). Allah's Apostle came along with Abu Talha. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "O Um Sulaim! Bring whatever you have." She brought the bread which Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) ordered to be broken into pieces. Um Sulaim poured on them some butter from an oilskin. Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) recited what Allah wished him to recite, and then said, "Let ten persons come (to share the meal)." Ten persons were admitted, ate their fill and went out. Then he again said, "Let another ten do the same." They were admitted, ate their fill and went out. Then he again said, "Let another ten persons (do the same.)" They were admitted, ate their fill and went out. Then he said, "Let another ten persons come." In short, all of them ate their fill, and they were seventy or eighty men. (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 56, Number 778, made available on www.sunnah.com).

However, the number of people who were fed by Jesus above is huge compared to the other examples, which may in fact have been a slight exaggeration by the author, since teaching five thousand people without the aid of loud speakers would have been impossible. Thus the number of people would most likely have been a lot less.

But that does not mean the miracle of multiplying food is to be denied, indeed Jesus may well have done so, like the other prophets, with the aim of not only feeding the people but also strengthening their faith. However, the reader will notice that this amazing miracle which is witnessed by so many people barely creates an impact on anyone. A man with the power to multiply food and feed hundreds if not thousands with food enough for only a family would have become very popular very quickly. Yet no surprise or impact seems to have been made on the crowds. Earlier miracles in Mark caused a great stir with Jesus' fame spread everywhere (1:28), yet all that is spoken of in the above miracle is that the people ate and were full.

It remains to be asked then, did the above miracle happen as depicted by our author Mark? If it did, why didn't the crowd respond favourably to Jesus as one would expect? It may be that they were unaware of the miracle, perhaps most of the people simply thought the disciples had bought all the food, or that Jesus told them not to inform anyone. If this be the case, then the purpose of the miracle was more about feeding the people than strengthening their faith. This does not go inline with the very purpose of most miracles of Prophets.

For the above reasons, I am more inclined to the point of view that the miracle did *not* happen as our author Mark portrays it, or if it did, it was exaggerated by Mark. The other alternative may be that the people may have brought their own food but were unwilling to share it. But being encouraged by the example of Jesus and his disciples, may have brought forth their food to share with others.

[183] Following on from the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus then instructed his disciples to go ahead of him in the boat while he himself dismissed the crowd, and after doing so, he went up the mountain to pray. In the meantime, it became rather late and the **boat** drifted off to the middle of the Galilean Sea. There was a strong **wind**, and it was between 3am and 6am, this was the meaning of the **fourth watch**; it was a custom of the Romans to divide the nights (6pm – 6am) into four equal periods for guards to be on watch, thus the fourth watch would be the very early hours of the morning, but still being dark.

It is not clear what the disciples were doing, whilst Jesus instructed them to go ahead of him; the reader is not informed where they were to go. It simply seems that the disciples got stuck in the middle of the Galilean Sea, making no progress to their destination, perhaps due to the severe wind blowing against them.

The statement that Jesus was intending to go by them, or **pass by them** makes little sense in the narrative. However, numerous interpreters have linked it to God *passing by* Moses in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:5-6). So basically, the author Mark is likening Jesus to God. The problem is though, no-where else in the Gospel of Mark does he liken or indicate that Jesus was God, or divine for that matter. Therefore, I think the above phrase is most likely an interpolation, i.e. a later Christian scribe wrote it in. The main reason being is that it makes absolutely no sense in the above narrative. Why would Jesus want to “pass by them”? Had he intended to pass by them, why didn't he? Why did he decide to get into the boat instead? (verse 51). The story is also recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and John, and neither write the odd phrase in this verse (verse 48b).

[184] This is one of the biggest miracles Jesus performs; while it might have been the case that Jesus *did* walk on some sort of water, it is easier to explain the above miracle naturally. After all, in ancient times, the act or power of being able to walk on water was often reserved for pagan gods or the sons of the gods, such as Orion the son of the sea god Poseidon. Some say that this miracle was borrowed or at least influenced by such tales.

However, it might have been a simple a miscalculation of the disciples or early Church; after all it was at night, and there was a strong wind. The exact distance is not indicated, and it may be that the boat was in a shallow part of the sea, where Jesus simply walked in the water to it: In the Gospel of John, it states that after Jesus got into the boat, the boat landed *straightaway* (John 6:21).

[185] After getting into the boat, the wind ceased and the disciples were astounded. It would be fine to end the story now, but the next verse (verse 52) makes absolutely no sense in the above context. What was the point of telling the audience that the disciples didn't understand the miracle of loaves? And what was there in the miracle of loaves that was hard to understand?

While our author Mark has previously criticised the intelligence of the disciples and will continue to do so (4:40; 9:32; 8:17; 6:52), this is the first time Mark is likening the disciples to the enemies of Jesus, just like in Mark 3:5, the same expression (**hearts were hardened**) is used. Some have argued that these are attacks on the original twelve disciples of Jesus who were part of the Jerusalem Church or Petrites; see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more details.

[186] After Jesus walks on water and gets into the boat, they land in **Gennesaret** (NW of the Sea of Galilee) which was not exactly where Mark states they intended to go in verse 45 above. In fact, they land quite far from Bethsaida (NE of the Sea). Perhaps it was due to the heavy winds. When Jesus gets off on shore, all the people recognise him as the healer and rush to bring their sick to him. The touching of his **garment** reminds the reader of the Woman with the Haemorrhage ([Mark 5:21-43](#)) who is also healed by simply touching Jesus' garment.

[187] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *they found fault* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

Commentary

In the previous passage, we are told about Jesus wandering around the villages, towns and fields healing the people. However, Chapter 7 of Mark's Gospel suddenly begins with him and his disciples sitting down to eat with no indication where or with whom they are eating. Verse 1 begins with the **Pharisees and scribes gathering** round him, having come particularly from Jerusalem to investigate his and the disciples' eating habits. As will be explained later, I am very sceptical of the whole account, I think much of it was invented by the author Mark.

[188] Important Words

The WEB translation reads as: *unless they wash their hands and forearms*, However, the noun in question is πύγμα (*pugma*) – Noun, dative singular, feminine, meaning: *a fist* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000). Check commentary below for more information.

[189] Textual Variant

Whilst most manuscripts read as above, the Codex Sinaiticus and the Received Text read; 'unless they *frequently* wash their hands'. Some later scribes unable to make any sense of the noun *fists* changed it to *frequently* (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.186).

Commentary

It is unclear what cleaning one's hands with a **clenched fist** actually means, since no such practice seems to exist in Jewish tradition. It may mean that the Pharisees and some of the Jews used to wash their hands up to the wrists, or perhaps rubbed their hands with their fists to rid them of as much dirt as possible.

[190] The Mishnah (a collection of Laws written by later Jews known as Rabbis) instructs that hands must be rinsed before eating food; this is mentioned in the category of *second tithe* or *heave-offering* or *unconsecrated food* (m.Hag 2:5). However, the requirements of washing one's hands for ordinary food does not exist in other traditions outside

the gospels, thus scholars have argued that it was probably an innovation made by the Pharisees during Jesus' time, or a little before.

[191] In this incident the Pharisees attack the actions of **the disciples** (much like in Mark 2:24) and not Jesus. Why do they protest over the actions of the disciples and not criticise Jesus? Could it be that Jesus washed his hands and his disciples did not? This is unlikely; thus again it is possible that this passage echoes an argument between the Jews and the later Church. The latter saw the washing of hands as a ritual and perhaps a burden, which they readily dropped, particularly the Church which Mark belonged to; it being a predominantly Gentile one whose members would not have been in the habit of washing their hands before meal times.

Famous scholars like Bultmann and Dibelius also question much of the above account, arguing that much of it would have been the creation of the author Mark (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p343). Verse 15 below seems to be the oldest tradition which the author Mark had access to; the scholars argue that Mark created the above story around the tradition. Basically, creating a context for the tradition.

[192] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds - *the washing of pitchers and cups, and you do many other such things* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

Commentary

Whilst the question of the Pharisees is not particularly hostile, the reply of Jesus is highly polemical and aggressive. The questioners are referred to as hypocrites when Jesus quotes the text of Isaiah 29:13; he points out that the Pharisees are those who worship God with mere lip service and not from the heart. Their worship is in vain due to them teaching the commandments of men as opposed to God's teaching. The teachings of humans correspond to the lip service whilst the divine teachings correspond to the worship of the heart. In essence, Jesus is answering their question by declaring that the traditions of washing hands before eating any sort of food was not from God, and thus he and his disciples did not need to follow it.

[193] The Pharisees cast aside the Divine commandments in order to uphold their own man-made laws and traditions. Jesus gives an example by quoting the first half of Exodus 20:12: 'Honour your father and your mother'; and Exodus 21:17: 'Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.' It is these laws which the Pharisees seem to ignore, and which Jesus is reminding them of.

However, should we blame the Pharisees for ignoring such a Law? A child who curses their parents should be put to death! This is quite harsh, even in Jesus' day. But rather than condemning such a law, Jesus is in fact reminding the Pharisees about this Law and criticising them for not following it. I myself do not believe Jesus would have said the above.

[194] Verse 11 introduces a vow, which is not present in the Bible. The saying again seems to refer to a particular tradition of the Pharisees or other Jews who seem to dedicate their property to the **Temple**, thus in a clever way not permitting their parents from using any of it. Such a tradition is an example of worshipping God through lip service and not through the heart, since the parents are completely left out from the son's services and work.

The Essene Gospel of Peace, a document alleged to be found in the archives of the Vatican in the beginning of the previous century speaks of some of the traditions of the Pharisees, which Jesus came to abrogate:

"And Jesus answered: 'God gave, by Moses, ten commandments to your forefathers. 'These commandments are hard,' said your forefathers, and they could not keep them. When Moses saw this, he had compassion on his people, and would not that they perish. And then he gave them ten times ten commandments... For he whose feet are strong as the mountain of Zion, needs no crutches; but he whose limbs do shake, gets further having crutches, than without them. And Moses said to the Lord: 'My heart is filled with sorrow, for my people will be lost. For they are without knowledge, and are not able to understand thy commandments. They are as little children who cannot yet understand their father's words. Suffer, Lord, that I give them other laws, that they may not perish. If they may not be with thee, Lord, let them not be against thee; that they may sustain themselves, and when the time has come, and they are ripe for thy words, reveal to them thy laws.' For that did Moses break the two tablets of stone whereon were written the ten commandments, and he gave them ten times ten in their stead. And of *these ten times ten the Scribes and Pharisees have made a hundred times ten commandments*. And they have laid unbearable burdens on your shoulders, that they themselves do not carry. For the more high are the commandments to God, the less do we need; and the farther they are from God, then the more do we need. Wherefore are the laws of the Pharisees and Scribes innumerable; the laws of the Son of Man seven; of the angels three; and of God one.

Therefore, I teach you only those laws which you can understand, that you may become men, and follow the seven laws of the Son of Man. Then will the unknown angels of the Heavenly Father also reveal their laws to you, that God's Holy Spirit may descend upon you, and lead you to his law.'" (Translated by Edmond Szekely and Purcell Weaver, published by The C.W Daniel Company in 2003, p.47-8)

[195] If the above is not authentic, it may well originate from an earlier and most likely authentic saying or tradition of Jesus.

Textual Variant

The WEB records this verse, along with the KJV. However, in the earlier manuscripts such as P⁴⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, it's not there! According to scholars some later scribes thought of adding it to provide a good ending to what they thought was a section starting from verse 14 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.187). The reason is somewhat irrelevant here, but the fact stands, Christian scribes were of the habit of chopping, changing and adding lines to the gospel texts as freely as they wanted.

[196] Now turning from the Pharisees and the scribes, Jesus calls the crowds. He teaches that nothing can make a man unclean; except unrighteousness and sinful conduct. It is not certain whether the crowds understand the saying or not, since the disciples later ask Jesus for further clarification. Mark has Jesus again attack the dullness of the disciples (see 4:40; 9:32; 8:17; 6:52 for further examples). He explains that whatever a man eats cannot defile him, since it enters the stomach and not the heart. The saying is to be seen as a reply to the accusation in verse 5, regarding eating with defiled hands.

The second part of verse 19 is the interpretation according to our author Mark, which is most likely to have been influenced by Paul who sought to abolish the Torah Law, particularly circumcision, Sabbath and the *food Laws*, e.g. he says: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean." (Rom 14:14). This is nonsense as God Himself states in the Torah that *camels, rock badger, hare, swine* are unclean (Lev 11:4-8). So do we trust Paul or God in this case?

Jesus wouldn't have contradicted the Torah Laws, or at least this particular Law which is very clear cut and direct. Had Jesus declared that **all foods were clean**, then the response of Peter in Acts 10:13-16 would be nonsensical: In the story, a Heavenly sheet of all types of food, both clean and unclean is presented to Peter. When instructed to eat, Peter protests that he has never eaten anything unclean. Did Peter not recall the above saying of Jesus? Furthermore, the intense dispute over table fellowship of Jews and Gentiles between Peter and Paul would have easily been resolved had either one heard of Jesus' instruction above; instead none display any knowledge of it and it results in

Paul leaving his base-church Antioch (Galatians 2:11).

The above was either a creation of the early Church, or the alternative is perhaps a misunderstanding: The second part of the verse; **thus he was cleansing all the food** could be a mistake by our author Mark or the document he was copying, whatever it was. A very famous Jesus scholar argued that the Aramaic *dekha* means *to be clean*, whilst the word *dukha* means *a latrine*. It is possible that Mark or his source, mistook *dekha* for *dukha* and thus understood Jesus to talk about food and *to be clean*, making Jesus declare all foods to be clean. The Old Syriac Gospel reading of this verse is: "Because it does not enter into the heart, but into the stomach, and is discharged to the outside *and all the food is purged*." The food is purged; there is nothing about declaring all foods clean according to this author as opposed to what Mark states above (Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 1973, p.29). This is more in line with Jesus' teachings and explains the reaction of Peter much later.

The final verses explain what comes out of a man, making him unclean. The list is presented with no link between each of the actions, but they do originate from the Torah.

[197] After the debate about defiled hands, Jesus moves further North West from Gennesaret into the region of **Tyre and Sidon**. The region is said to be predominantly Gentile, which meant there were very few Jews there and most likely a place which Jesus was passing through rather than preaching.

Some Christians have argued that Jesus went to Gentile lands to preach, but the text of Mark doesn't say that anywhere. Rather as the above indicates, he went there to hide (verse 24); he desired seclusion, and not to preach or begin a mission to the Gentiles. No doubt a land filled with Gentiles would have left him alone more than a land filled with Jews.

Furthermore, numerous scholars have argued that the region covered a large area, comprising areas that belonged to the Holy Land which were inhabited by Jews, thus Jesus may have spent time in the area of Tyre, but in Jewish villages. Matthew's version of this story makes it clearer since the woman who comes to Jesus *came out from those borders*, indicating that she came out of Gentile lands to meet Jesus, see [Matthew 15:22](#) (Ulrich Luz, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Matthew*, 2001, p.338).

A Gentile woman with a sick daughter seeks him out and finding him, falls at his **feet** and begs him to heal her daughter. Jesus initially refuses, answering with a parable; the **children** refer to the Jewish people and **dogs** have often been the derogatory term for Gentiles by Jews. Different scholars have presented interpretations on what kind of dogs Jesus meant, either house pets (Ulrich Luz, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Matthew*, 2001, p.340), or wild scavenging dogs which often roamed in packs (David Rhoads, *Jesus and the Syrophenician Woman in Mark*, 1994, p.356). Either way, Jesus wants nothing to do with her since she is a Gentile, and goes so far as calling her (and all Gentiles) **dogs**. Those Christians who argue that Jesus came for all of humanity should re-read the above passage, as this explicitly shows the mission of Jesus being for the Jews only. Matthew's account in [15:21-28](#) makes it even more explicit!

The woman uses the same metaphor and beats Jesus in his own game, so to speak, by arguing that even dogs eat the scraps that fall off the table. After observing such faith, Jesus gives in and carries out her request. The account is very similar to the Centurion of Capernaum ([Matthew 8:5-13](#)) who also was a Gentile who begged Jesus to heal his servant/son. It seems that Jesus wished to have nothing to do with the Gentile woman, but witnessing her faith, *her faith in his ability to heal her daughter*, not her faith in him being the Messiah or Saviour of the world, he seems to have a genuine change of heart. The woman like the centurion is an exception.

I would like to stress, the Gentile woman did not seek his guidance, nor did Jesus teach her anything. He simply healed her daughter and that's it. She did not become a follower. *Jesus did not preach anything to any Gentile in his life*. He was a Prophet for the Jews:

“And (Jesus will be) a Messenger to the Children of Israel...” (Holy Quran 3:50).

[198] After healing the Syrophoenician woman's daughter, Jesus leaves Tyre and Sidon and goes further up north. People then bring to Jesus a **deaf** and dumb man, one not able to hear or speak, and ask him to **lay his hands** on the man, thus believing with his touch that the man will be healed. The healing narrative is different from many others as Jesus does not simply touch the man and heal him like he does to others, e.g. Peter's mother-in-law (1:31).

This time, Jesus takes the man aside in private; he then places his **fingers** in his **ears** and **spits** on the man's **tongue**. The saliva of men, particularly holy men, has often been utilised and spoken of in healing accounts in ancient history: Phiny the Elder, the first century Roman Philosopher, mentions that saliva has many remedial uses (National History 38.5.25). Even in more modern times, Prophets have used saliva to heal people, check under [Mark 8:22](#) below for examples.

Jesus then looks up at heaven and sighs, demonstrating some sort of intense prayer to aid in the healing of the man. The concept of **sighing** or groaning is also common in antiquity, particularly magical rites; the Paris Papyrus contains a charm which ends with: “After reciting this, throw incense on the fire, groan loudly, and descend, going backwards.” Returning to the above narrative, the man's ears and tongue were healed by the actions of Jesus. They both then join the crowd and Jesus instructs the crowd not to tell others of the miracle, which is known as the *Messianic Secret of Mark*; see under [Mark 3:11](#) for more details.

This is one of the very rare accounts in the Gospel of Mark which is not repeated in the other gospels. Some scholars have argued that the above was not in the earliest copies of Mark, which is why it is absent in Matthew and Luke. This may be the case; however, it is also likely that the other gospels chose to omit the account due to the lack of magical or miraculous powers of Jesus, or the latter using traditional remedial techniques to heal a man.

[199] The reader will notice stark similarities between the above account and the account of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:32-44). However, there are differences in the two narratives; Jesus takes the initiative in the above account, telling the disciples that he feels pity for the people who have been with him for three days, as opposed to the disciples asking Jesus to dismiss them in the other account. The disciples are ignorant of the power of Jesus in both accounts, which may seem surprising since at least in the above, they should have recalled the miracle of feeding the five thousand a little earlier. The number of loaves differs, so does the number of baskets required to collect the remaining food, and the actions of Jesus when breaking the bread.

Yet, these differences are negligible compared to the similarities of the two accounts.

Some Christians have attempted to argue that the first feeding account consisted of feeding Jews (they argue that the **twelve baskets** point to the twelve tribes of Israel), whilst the second consisted of feeding Gentiles (the seven **baskets** refer to the seven Gentile nations mentioned in Deut 7:1), so as to begin the mission to the Gentiles. This is nonsense, since there is no indication that the crowds were Gentiles, and the parallel story in Matthew has the crowd glorifying the *God of Israel* (Matthew 15:31), so both crowds were Jews.

The remaining question left is: ‘Did Jesus feed two crowds of people?’ This is unlikely, since the disciples ask Jesus the same question twice about how they are able to feed the people, which would make sense in the first account, but not in the second one, as they at least should have recalled that earlier Jesus had fed even more people. So why does Mark record it twice? Probably he got confused, he had read of two different accounts of the same event, saw some of the differences and then thought that Jesus maybe did it twice. So he recorded it happening twice! Making a bit of a mess.

The only other option is that the feeding of the thousands was a vision or dream of Jesus or his disciples. Visions if passed down in oral traditions can be converted into literal events, and this might have happened. It is reported in the Holy Quran that the disciples of Jesus request Jesus to *bring from heaven spread with food that it may be to us a*

festival (5:115). This probably refers to the Messianic banquet and has numerous interpretations, see the full commentary provided by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.839-830 for a fuller commentary of the Quranic verses. It could be that this request was a vision made literal and through decades of story telling made its final form in the Gospel of Mark above.

[200] Textual Variant

Where is **Dalmanutha**? No one knows! It's only mentioned in the gospel of Mark and nowhere else, the same story in the Gospel of Matthew states that Jesus and his disciples went to *Magadan*. For this reason, one later Christian scribe thought to correct our author and write that they *went to the district of Magadan* (Codex Bezae). Most manuscripts though read as above (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.188).

[201] Out of nowhere some Pharisees come along and ask Jesus for a sign from heaven. This is odd, since just a little earlier he fed four thousand people with a few pieces of bread and fish! Jesus could have simply pointed to the people and said, "Ask them!"

[202] Sadly, and this may come as a bit of a surprise, but there is no sign of Jonah in Mark's Gospel; when the Pharisees asked for a sign from Heaven, he simply brushed them aside and walked off. The account is different in the gospel of Matthew; where after feeding the four thousand, Jesus is then asked by the Pharisees for a sign and he gives them the *Sign of Jonah*, see [Matthew 12:38-42](#).

Mark probably was unaware of the full account of the Sign of Jonah, which Matthew seems to have. Or he did have it, but for some reason or another, decided not to record it all. Readers wanting to know it in detail, see notes in Matthew.

[203] The above account begins with the disciples forgetting the baskets of bread (after collecting the pieces when the four thousand were fed) and carry just one loaf of bread. Whilst on the boat, Jesus gives them a short lesson; he warns them of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod. **Leaven** has often been interpreted to be wickedness and evil, or the corrupt teachings of the people (Galatians 5:9). Therefore, Jesus is likely to be warning his disciples of the corruption of the Pharisees and Herod; this may be due to them demanding a sign a little earlier.

In response to the warning, the disciples begin discussing amongst themselves pointing out that they have no bread, (even though they have one loaf in verse 14). The level of intelligence displayed by the disciples seems to fall to a record low; why they admit to having no bread after Jesus warns them of the leaven *of the* Pharisees and Herod is very odd. Jesus responds angrily, and forces them to repeat the basic facts of the events from the last few days. Yet, even after repeating the facts, they still fail to understand and are scolded again. The reader can only feel sorry for Jesus for having to bear with a bunch of dimwits, as portrayed above.

In reality though, the disciples of Jesus were nothing of the sort as portrayed by our author, they were the chosen people, by Jesus and by God Himself who gifted them guidance to accept Jesus. They were the best of the Jews. How could these people be so ignorant as the above portrays? The only answer is that the above account was invented by our author, to put the disciples down. Why would he do that? Because he was a follower of Paul who did not get along with the original disciples, preaching a different message to them. For later Christians who would have questioned the followers of Paul, they would have pointed out that the original disciples were dull and didn't understand the message of Jesus properly. Paul did.

[204] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *nor tell anyone in the village* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such

as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

Commentary

After rebuking his disciples for not understanding his warning about the leaven of the Pharisees, they all come to **Bethsaida**. The people of the village bring to Jesus a **blind man** and ask him to touch him. The reader will recall the former healing of the Deaf Mute (7:31-37).

Again, Jesus takes the man away from the crowds and this time Jesus **spits** into his **eyes** and lays his hands on him. Like the earlier account, the saliva of Jesus is used to heal the man. After spitting into his eyes, Jesus wished to confirm the healing and asks the man if he can see. The man affirms that he can, but the men look like **trees** to him, how does he know what trees look like if he was blind? Thus, we know for certain he wasn't born blind, but probably suffered from some sort of eye trouble.

A second attempt is made by Jesus to heal him, mission successful. The man is then directed not to go into the village; one would assume that if the man had been taken out of the village by Jesus, he would naturally be sent back, but it would seem to be the case that he did not live in the village, but perhaps close by in a farm, and was directed to return home. Why he was directed not to return to the village is not explained, perhaps this relates to the *Messianic Secret of Mark*. For more information see under [Mark 3:12](#).

Like the other account, this miracle is omitted by both Matthew and Luke, most likely due to the gradual healing process and weakness of Jesus; him not being able to heal immediately with just a touch.

A similar event occurs in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), where he, too, cures the eyesight of his cousin Hazrat Ali (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 253). Likewise does Jesus' counterpart, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, who cured the eyes of a sick girl:

"Among these was the incident of the miraculous cure of chronic inflammation of the eyes for Amtullah Bibi, an Afghani Ahmadi, who as a child had gone to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) for prayer and healing. He simply put his saliva on his finger, momentarily waited, perhaps saying a prayer, and then put the saliva on the girl's eyes, and told her that she would be free of the disease. The incident was related by Amtullah Bibi at the age of 70." (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, *Friday Sermon Aug 25th 2006; Unique Acceptance of Prayers of the Promised Messiah*)

[205] After the gradual healing of the blind man, Jesus moves along with his disciples. Unlike most other traditions where the disciples ask Jesus to explain a parable or teaching, this is one of the rare instances where Jesus himself begins a conversation with his disciples. He asks them **who the people** think or say he is.

The build-up to his identity is shown above; some people think he is **John the Baptist** come back to life, or maybe **Elijah**, yet other people are uncertain and consider Jesus to be another prophet of God. But then the important question is raised by Jesus: Who do *they*, the disciples think he is?

Peter acts as the spokesperson and answers Jesus' question by saying that he is the **Christ**. Instead of confirming the answer, Jesus simply instructs them to keep this conversation a secret; the *Messianic Secret* coming into play again (see under [Mark 3:12](#)). Jesus may have instructed the disciples to remain silent so as to avoid trouble since the Jews were probably not ready for his teachings or would have likely caused trouble due to their awaiting the Saviour figure/Messiah. See under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details on what the Jews expected the Messiah would do. Or it could be that Jesus was not yet instructed by God to publicly announce his position.

Readers are recommended to check the parallel to the above story in the [Gospel of Matthew 16:13-20](#) for a more complete story. Our author Mark seems to omit probably the most important aspect of the tradition; the naming of Peter outlined in verse 17 and 18 in Matthew's Gospel. Why did Mark omit that part? Probably because Peter was an opponent of Mark's hero Paul (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels at the beginning of this work for more details).

[206] After the identity of Jesus is confirmed; that he is the Messiah, Jesus then supposedly teaches his disciples what he will go through. He prophesies that it is necessary for him to be rejected by the Jewish **elders, chief priests and scribes** and that he will be **killed, but will rise after three days**. Peter then takes him aside and tells him off, doesn't Jesus know what the Messiah is supposed to do? He doesn't come to the Jews only to get himself killed! See under [Mark 1:1](#) for a detailed analysis of what the Messiah was to do in Jewish tradition.

It should be stressed that no Jewish tradition expected the Messiah to come and get himself killed, and then resurrect. Nor is there any prophecy in the Old Testament, nor any apocryphal work for that matter, which speaks of a dying Messiah who would be raised after three days. I repeat again, there is no prophecy anywhere in Jewish scripture indicating that the Messiah was to die and resurrect (some Christians may bring up the Suffering Servant Songs in Isaiah, but check under [Matthew 8:17](#) for an analysis which proves that this is not the case).

The entire passage above would either be the words of our author Mark or more likely a tradition created by the Church; scholars such as Adela Yarbro Collins (*Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p.403) have come to the same conclusion.

Analysing the text historically adds support to the fact that Mark (or his source) created this. Jesus apparently foretells his 'death' *four* times in the Gospel of Mark alone. He predicts more in the other gospels! Had Jesus informed his disciples on *four* different occasions that he would suffer rejection, be killed and then be raised on the third day, then when the time came for Jesus' arrest, one would expect the disciples to recall the numerous prophecies of Jesus, some just a few days prior, and celebrate the fulfilment of the prophecies and patiently wait for the third day for the return of Jesus. They would have seen Jesus getting arrested (first part of the prophecy fulfilled), beaten (that too as he prophesied) and killed; (he told them that as well). The disciples should have just relaxed in the comfort of their homes knowing that he'd resurrect and meet them shortly.

Yet, according to the gospels themselves, at the time of arrest, the disciples flee in fear, completely forsaking him (Mark 14:50). Peter even denies knowing Jesus (Mark 14:66-72) and when the disciples are told by the women that Jesus has risen from the dead, just like Jesus had told them *four times*, they do not believe them and think the women are crazy (Luke 24:11).

This does not sound like men who have been warned numerous times that the events which they witnessed shall happen. Instead, the disciples react with shock and horror, seeing their beloved master being rejected and placed onto the cross. Not one of them recalls these 'prophecies'. Did *all* the disciples forget? The prophecies were not parables and were spoken **plainly or openly** as the above passage states.

We're left with two conclusions: First being that Jesus prophesied numerous times but *all* the disciples forgot, and thus the stupidity of the disciples (particularly as displayed in the Gospel of Mark; see under [Mark 4:20](#)) is confirmed. This in turn casts serious doubt on the entire Church's foundations, particularly after Peter is called 'the Rock' on which Jesus will build his Church (Matt 16: 13-20). After all, it was these same disciples who tell us of the life of Jesus. Any tradition originating from these dimwits would be rejected immediately by Islamic scholars of the past: You had to have some basic intelligence to transmit accounts of teachers and Prophets.

Numerous Christians have argued and agree with the lack of intelligence of the disciples in the gospels, but state that it was *after* the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 that the disciples understood everything and stood as pillars and forces not to be reckoned with. Maybe, but the character of the disciples, particular Peter, doesn't change much from

the gospels *after* receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. If the New Testament is taken at face value, then Peter completely misunderstood Jesus' instruction that all foods are clean (Mark 7:19) when he argued with God about eating such food (Acts 10:14). This is *after* he received the Holy Spirit. A little later, Peter proves to be a hypocrite in Antioch and is rebuked by Paul in front of everyone (Gal 2). So we do not see much of a difference.

The alternative is to acknowledge that the above was the creation of the Church, and that Jesus never prophesied or predicted his death. Mark (or his source) understood that it was the sole mission of Jesus to die and to be resurrected; an idea which he inherited from Paul. However, it seems that none of his sources (traditions he had heard about Jesus) spoke of it. So what did he do? He created the accounts or learnt it from other members of his Church, even though it painted the original followers of Jesus as complete morons.

[207] After Jesus privately foretells his death to his disciples, he suddenly summons a crowd to himself; the origin of the crowd is not explained. The phrase **come after me** recalls a similar saying to Peter in Mark 1:14 where the latter is summoned by Peter to follow him. Those wishing to come after Jesus and follow him are to deny themselves; meaning that the person must refuse to recognise or must ignore himself. The mentioning of the **cross** may be metaphorical as presented by Luke 9:23.

[208] Important Words

See note in Mark 1:1 for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion/gospel*). The WEB translates the word as *Good News* which is correct; however I have opted for the above, see notes on next verse for a fuller explanation.

[209] Jesus clarifies further in verses 36 and 37; what is the point in gaining the entire world in return for one's life? After all, a man's possessions will remain in this world and will not accompany him to the next, and he is unable to use any of his possessions or gains to ransom his soul. A similar saying and warning is presented in the Holy Quran:

“And if that every soul which wronged itself possessed all in the earth, and sought to ransom itself therewith and they will feel regret when they see the punishment, and judgement will be passed among them with justice and they will not be wronged.” (10: 55)

[210] The final verse may initially seem out of place, but fits the above context relatively well. Those who are **ashamed** of Jesus are the opposite of those who **deny themselves and take up their crosses**, and when Jesus returns (in his second coming) he, too, will be **ashamed** of them. For they wished to **save their lives** and did not wish to **lose their lives for Jesus and his gospel's sake**. The verse depicts the Jewish people, particularly those who rejected Jesus, the vast majority, as an evil generation, whom God will forsake in the near future.

The readers may be reminded of the *bai'at* initiation carried out by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, *bai'at* means handing over one's life to Almighty Allah, so says the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him):

“To take bai'at means handing over your life to Almighty Allah. It means, ‘Today we have sold our life to Almighty Allah.’ It is wrong to say that by treading in the path of Allah anybody would ultimately suffer a loss. The truthful can never be in a state of loss. Only he who is false—i.e., who, for worldly gain, breaks the pledge that he has made with Almighty Allah— suffers loss. One who commits such an action because of the fear of the world should remember that at the time of his death no ruler or king of this world would come to procure his release. He has to present himself to the Judge of all the judges, who will enquire of him, ‘Why did you not honour Me?’ Therefore, it is essential for all the believers to believe in Allah, Who is the King of the heavens and earth and to make a true repentance.” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 7, pp. 29–30)

The above saying of the Promised Messiah is remarkably similar to the saying of Jesus. The similarity would no doubt be expected, since both were Prophets of God, and Messiahs. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon) was the counter-part of Jesus. Their teachings would no doubt be very similar.

[211] It is not entirely clear what Jesus means here when he refers to **God's Kingdom**, see notes under [Matthew 3:2](#) for details of what the phrase could mean. If it refers to the end of days and the second coming of Jesus, then the prophecy clearly did not come true, elsewhere Jesus makes a similar prophecy, see under [Mark 13:31](#). However, it might simply refer to the establishment of the Church, or the Jesus movement.

[212] The hearing of God's voice from heaven has been touched upon already; please see [Mark 1:11](#).

[213] After teaching the crowds about how to follow Jesus, he departs from them. The Markan text continues the narrative after **six days**, where he takes three of his disciples up a mountain and transfigures (**changes to another form**). The above is a common method of showing previous dead people, most likely visions, take for example the Apocalypse of Peter which records an event where the disciples ask Jesus to show them one of their brothers who has departed from this world:

"And as we prayed, suddenly there appeared two men standing before the Lord towards the East, on whom we were not able to look; for there came forth from their countenance a ray as of the sun, and their raiment was shining, such as eye of man never saw; for no mouth is able to express or heart to conceive the glory with which they were endued, and the beauty of their appearance." (The Akhmim Fragment, 6-8, made available at: www.earlychristianwritings.com.)

The above shows the appearance of dead saints of the past appearing like Elijah and Moses in the above Markan text, but what of Jesus? Why did he change as well? He was not dead! It might be as simple as the author read or heard that the previous prophets appearing in magnificent glory and felt it inappropriate that Jesus not be left out, making Jesus shine like them too.

Alternatively, there may be other influences present here; in Greek mythology, the gods often took the form of humans when visiting the earth, for example: in the Iliad, the god Apollo takes on the form of a man to encourage Aeneas to battle against Achilles (20:81-82). The other way round is also attested and bears remarkable similarities to the above transfiguration, where an old wet-nurse is transfigured or transformed into a god in front of her employer: "Thus speaking, the goddess changed her size and appearance, thrusting off old age. Beauty breathed about her and from her sweet robes a delicious fragrance spread; a *light beamed far out* from the goddess' immortal skin..." (Hom. *Him 2 ad Dem* 275-80). After witnessing this, the employer immediately builds a Temple and altar for her, much like Peter proposes.

The most likely explanation is that the above was some sort of vision, and details were sparse, resulting in the borrowing of extra material from outside sources to magnify the event. The appearance of Moses and Elijah may either reflect the belief among some Jews that neither of them died: Elijah is said to have been carried away into heaven (2 Kings 2:11); whilst the Jewish historian Josephus argued the same regarding Moses (Antiquities 4.8.48), even though the Old Testament indicates his death (Deut 34:5).

[214] Lastly, in verses 9 and 10 the *Messianic Secret* comes into play. For a more in-depth discussion on the Messianic Secret, see under [Mark 3:11](#). Jesus orders them not to tell anyone about what they saw, until he has risen from the dead. The disciples obey his instruction but then discuss among themselves what he meant by rising from the dead. Did he mean his own death? If so, why did they question themselves what it meant? It's not the hardest thing to understand, they seem to have completely understood it before in 8:32, resulting in Peter rebuking Jesus. And as shown under the Introduction of the Four Canonical Gospels, under Mark, this concept of the Messianic Secret; about Jesus hiding his true identity, and teachings for that matter makes absolutely no sense and seems to be a theology created by our author Mark. The above verse 10 is just another

example and it most likely made up by the author as well.

[215] After the transfiguration the disciples ask Jesus concerning the second coming of **Elijah**. The disciples have in mind the last passage of the Old Testament:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6).

Within the context of Mark, the disciples seem to recall the prophecy in the Old Testament about Elijah’s return after seeing him in the vision earlier. In verse 12 Jesus’ response confirms the view of the scribes, but then Jesus introduces another prophecy, one about the son of man coming and suffering. The expression **as it is written** signifies that it is based upon an Old Testament text, yet no such prophecy exists of the coming of any son of man for that matter (see under [Mark 2:10](#) for details of the son of man). Nor is there any prophecy regarding the suffering of the Messiah or any saviour figure (some Christians may bring up the Suffering Servant Songs in Isaiah, but check under [Matthew 8:17](#) for an analysis).

The same problem exists in the very next verse where Jesus attests that Elijah has come in the form of John the Baptist, and that the people persecuted him **as was written of him**. Yet, nowhere is it mentioned in the Old Testament that the second coming of Elijah would result in his persecution, rejection or death. As such it can be argued with a high degree of certainty that the above passage is all a Markan creation and not the words of Jesus. Why the author Mark created it is uncertain, perhaps some early Christians thought that his end too was prophesied in the Old Testament and Mark our author heard of the traditions and wrote them in the gospel without verifying them.

Verse 13 speaks of the fulfilment of the coming of Elijah; that he has already come and in the form of John the Baptist (see Matthew’s parallel story in [17:13](#)). Thus it seems that Jesus interpreted the prophecy of the Old Testament passage allegorically. Even though the Old Testament speaks of Elijah physically ascending into heaven (2 Kings 2:11), the descent or return of Elijah is interpreted allegorically in the form of John the Baptist. See [Mark 1:2-6](#) for details of how the gospels depict him as the forerunner of Jesus metaphorically, which in turn has been a major obstacle for modern Jews in accepting Jesus as the Messiah, since they still await the literal descent of Elijah.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) has explained the above verse in detail. Sadly, the Muslim world, too, awaits the second coming of Jesus in the physical sense, very much like the Jews were and still are awaiting the second coming of Elijah in the physical sense. This was the question posed to Jesus in verse 11 above. The Promised Messiah utilised the above example to explain his own coming in the *likeness* of Jesus:

“The promise of his coming in the latter days means his coming in the spiritual sense, like the coming of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah. Like Elijah, he has already appeared in this age and it is I, the writer, a servant of mankind, who has appeared in the name of the Messiah as the Promised Messiah. Jesus has told of my coming in the Gospels, and blessed is he who, out of love for Jesus, considers my claim with justice and fairness, and saves himself from going astray.” (*Jesus in India*, 2016, p.42)

[216] Whilst the three disciples were witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus, the remaining disciples were busying themselves at the bottom of the mountain by healing many people; scribes seem to have turned up as well and begin to question and argue with them.

[217] Why the crowd is amazed (verse 15) when they see Jesus is uncertain; perhaps it is due to his authority, but either way they see him and run to him. Jesus asks the scribes and disciples what they were arguing about. Instead of addressing his question, a man steps forward from the crowd and seeks Jesus’ attention to heal his child. The man

describes the symptoms caused by the **dumb spirit**, these being similar to epilepsy. In ancient times often diseases were described as being caused by spirits and demons. He also complains about the inability of the disciples to help his child. Jesus complains about the lack of faith of the people; he may be referring to the scribes who were standing by watching or even to his disciples who were unable to heal the boy.

[218] When the boy is brought to Jesus, one of his seizures kicks in. The comment that it was the spirit that caused it, is to illustrate that the spirit, which was dumb and unable to speak made its intentions clear through its actions. Jesus then asks a second time, enquiring how long the child has been suffering like this. The father answers that it was since infancy, hinting that the boy has probably reached puberty. The father continues and repeats the symptoms and finally asks Jesus that if he is able to, he should help them. The question is similar to the question of the leper in 1:41, and Jesus reacts angrily like he did then. He snaps back at the man, that all things are possible to the believer! The father's reply in verse 24 increases the tension and shows his desperation.

[219] For details on demon possession and exorcism, see under [Mark 1:26](#). Similar to his previous exorcisms (1:25) he commands the spirit to depart from the boy and orders it never to return, much like the instruction of the exorcism of a certain Eleazar according to Josephus who made the demon swear that it would never come back to its victim (Antiquities 8.2.5).

[220] Textual Variant

Both Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus remove the final two words and end with just *prayer*, whilst Manuscript P⁴⁵, Codex Alexandrinus and Bezae read as above. Some scholars are of the opinion that the words *and fasting* were added by scribes later due to the emphasis of the Church (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.191). However, I believe the opposite might be the case, the lack of fasting in the Gentile Church, and the fact that Jesus himself did practise fasting (Matthew 4:2).

After the exorcism, Jesus departs and enters a house, where the disciples ask him why they were not able to cast out the demon. For the first time in the gospel, the exorcism is attributed to **prayer**. This fact may shed new light on some of the exorcisms of Jesus, that it may be due to his praying for the victims. A similar story occurs with the Jewish saint: Hanina Ben Dosa, the son of Gamaliel is suffering from a fever and he sends out two of his pupils to Hanina to bring him back and cure his son. Hanina walked into another room to pray and returned to the pupils informing them to return, as the son was cured of his illness (Talmud, bBer. 34b; yBer. 9d).

[221] After Jesus heals the possessed boy, he foretells his 'death' again; the first time being a few chapters earlier in Chapter 8 verse 31. The saying placed in Jesus' mouth is remarkably similar to the previous prediction, but the reaction of the disciples is the complete opposite. Whilst earlier, the disciples, or Peter, at least responded by taking Jesus aside and rebuking him telling him that this will never happen, in the above, the disciples fail to understand, even though Jesus said the same thing. Before they were able to make sense of it, now they not only forget, but can't seem to comprehend the same and identical prophecy. As before, this all points to the early Church creating these prophecies about the dying Messiah.

[222] It is interesting that when arriving back at Capernaum, Jesus enters into **the house**, this may well be his own or Peter's, which seems to have served as a kind of base location for Jesus and his disciples.

[223] While they were travelling the disciples were discussing something; Jesus (often in Mark) displays ignorance (like any human) and asks them what they were discussing. This is something which both Matthew and Luke omit. For some reason or another, the disciples remain silent and do not answer his question. Not to worry, Jesus already knows! Leaving readers wondering why ask them in the first place? He proceeds to explain what true **greatness** is in the following verses.

The true sign of **greatness** lies in humility and servitude. Considering oneself to be last will enable one to be first in the hereafter. This idea would very likely to have come from Jesus himself, the Holy Quran fully agrees:

“Verily, those who believe and do good deeds and humble themselves to their Lord, they are the dwellers of Heaven, they will abide therein forever.” (11: 24).

There are numerous hadith which teach the same message: Narrated Haritha bin Wahb:

I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, “Shall I tell you of the people of Paradise? They comprise every poor humble person, and if he swears by Allah to do something, Allah will fulfil it; while the people of the fire comprise every violent, cruel arrogant person.” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 78, Number 651, made available on www.sunnah.com).

With regards to servitude, it is reported by Narrated Al-Aswad: That he asked `Aisha “What did the Prophet (ﷺ) use to do in his house?” She replied, “He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was the time for prayer he would go for it.” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 65, made available on www.sunnah.com).

[224] Verses 36 to 37 seem to be modelled on 10:16 where the presence of children is explicit and essential to the saying, whilst in the above the child seems to come out of nowhere. The placing of the child in their midst and then embracing the child suggests that the above issue revolves around whether children (unimportant or insignificant people) should be admitted into the community. Or another possible interpretation could be the abolishment of infanticide, which was common among the Romans and Greeks in order to control the size of their families (Josephus, Ap. 2:24:202). Since Mark was himself a Gentile and writing for Gentile converts, the instruction to forbid such practices would be easy if placed in Jesus’ mouth.

However, this does not mean that Jesus never said the above, the saying above can be viewed as quite in-line with Islamic philosophy, i.e. those who receive Jesus, do not receive him, but rather receive God Himself. For the prophet chosen by God is only a messenger, they themselves are nothing in comparison to the One they preach about and bring people to.

It also illustrates the complete contrast to Jesus, a prophet of God and God Himself: If Jesus was god or part of god, then the above saying is difficult; God sending god? Or one who receives Jesus (god?) does not receive Jesus (god?) but received God. As can be seen, the statement makes no sense at all. There is a clear differentiation between Jesus and God.

[225] After teaching the disciples to receive children in Jesus’ name, one of the disciples, **John**, informs Jesus of another **exorcist** who was exorcising demons in **Jesus’ name**. Jesus responds by telling his disciples **not** to stop the man, for anyone who is with them is not against them. Furthermore, anyone who uses the name of Jesus will never speak bad or evil of Jesus and thus will never become an enemy of the Church.

The saying may be true, certain people may have tried to heal others in the name of Jesus or rather the God of Jesus, and Jesus would not have had an issue with such people. He felt that those who do so, would never **speak evil of him**, since they are using his name after all.

However, in the fifth book in the New Testament, the book of Acts, in Chapter 19, verses 13-17:

“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

What happened in the above? The poor men were using Jesus’ name, but ended up getting beaten up and stripped naked! The evil spirit didn’t seem to be aware of Jesus’ saying and broke the rules. Or more likely, the author of Acts (Luke) probably forgot about the saying or disagreed: He copied the above saying in his own gospel, but omits the part where Jesus says that the one using his name will never speak evil of him, see [Luke 9:49-50](#).

[226] This verse speaks of causing the child to stumble, which may in fact be about paedophilia, particularly against infant boys since the **little ones** is in the masculine gender. To avoid such a sin, Jesus is teaching that it is better that one be thrown into the sea rather than committing such a heinous act.

The alternative is that the **little ones** are the innocent and Jesus’ saying is a warning to those who lead these innocents astray, most likely leading astray in the sexual sense, since the passage is about sexual temptations.

[227] The above interpretation is supported by the verses which follow. In verse 43 Jesus speaks about cutting off one’s hand if it causes one to stumble, since it is better for man to enter Heaven crippled than to enter (**Gehenna**) hell whole. The instruction has been interpreted allegorically by the majority of Christians, since very few of any instances have been heard of where Christians have cut off their hands to prevent them from sinning. However, some scholars have pointed out that the word **hand** here is used in place of the penis (Adela Yarbro Collins, Mark: A Commentary *Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible*, 2007, p.450; G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Volume 5*, 2006, p.402; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Volume 4*, 1988, p.433).

Taking that into account, scholars have argued that the saying would be advocating a severe punishment for *adultery with the hand*, i.e. masturbation. It is recorded in the Mishnah: “Every hand which frequently examines [the genitals for symptoms, for example of menstruation] is, among women, praiseworthy; but among men, let it be cut off.” (m.Nid. 2.1)

If Jesus was referring to masturbation, he was simply stressing the severity of the act, which amongst the Gentiles may have been seen as a relatively harmless activity. Indeed, even in modern times the act is seen as relatively harmless and “natural”, but to religious personages, both in Christianity and Islam, the act is seen as a sin and should be avoided. The main reason being is that it can lead to further sexual sins.

[228] Textual Variant

Most other Bible versions and translations omit verses 44 and 46, due to them being additions, forgeries basically. They are not in the oldest manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. A later scribe thought to add them in, perhaps for poetic reasons (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.191).

[229] Verse 45 is similar to the above; the Hebrew word for **foot** is sometimes used instead when referring to a man’s genitals. Judges 3:24 “When he had gone, the servants came; and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, ‘He is only relieving himself (literally *he covers the feet*) in the closet of the cool

chamber.'" The same analogy is used in 1 Sam 24:3. Likewise in Ezekiel 16:25 "at the head of every street you built your lofty place and prostituted your beauty, offering yourself (literally: *opened your feet*) to any passer-by, and multiplying your harlotry."

While the hand was referred to as *adultery of the hand*, the foot would refer to adultery in the traditional sense, i.e. walking and going to a woman to perform the act. However, just like the case above, the teaching is to be interpreted allegorically, in that the crime should be avoided at all costs rather than having people cut off their own limbs.

The Holy Quran's teaching regarding adultery echoes Jesus', however it is more profound and extensive:

"And go not near to adultery, verily, it is a great sin and it is an evil way." (Holy Quran, 17:33).

"Another direction is: Approach not adultery. This means that one should avoid all occasions that might incite one's mind in that direction, and should eschew all the paths that might lead to this vice. He who indulges in this vice carries his viciousness to the extreme. The way of adultery is an evil way as it obstructs one's progress towards the goal and is extremely harmful to the achievement of the purpose of life. Those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste through the adoption of other means; for instance, through fasting or dieting or exercise." (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, 1896, p.47)

[230] Textual Variant

Check under verse 44.

[231] Finally, in verse 47, the stumbling with the eye should be interpreted in a similar context to the above two examples, in that it would refer to erotic gazes. Matthew makes this link as well (5:28). The Holy Quran, too, has a similar but more explicit command to avoid such gazes:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gazes and protect their private parts." (Holy Quran 23:31)

Explaining the verse, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) states:

"*Furuj* does not refer merely to the private parts. It refers to all parts of the entry in the body including the ears. It has been prohibited to hear the song of an unrelated woman. Remember, it is proven by hundreds of experiments, that if God prohibits something, man has to leave it sooner or later." (*Mulfuzat*, Vol 7, p.135)

[232] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt* at end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[233] The final three verses were probably added due to the saying of fire in verse 48. Salt is likened to fire above, which is spoken of as a method of judgement in 1 Cor 3:13, 15; where people will be burned and what is left will be saved. The instruction in verse 50 to **have salt in yourselves** is most likely a metaphor for protecting oneself from corruption, from the sins spoken of in the above verses.

[234] From the text, it is uncertain why the Pharisees were testing by asking Jesus if **divorce** is permitted. Perhaps they wished to know which school of thought Jesus sided with when it came to divorce; there were two schools of thought; the *Shammai* and the *Hillel*. Both these schools were formed from Jewish scholars by the same name in first century CE. When it came to the matter of divorce; the *Shammai* school of thought permitted a man to divorce his wife only if she committed adultery. But the *Hillel* school of thought had relaxed the ruling and permitted divorce even on trivial matters, such as the wife's cooking. However it is still uncertain how this was a test; it is likely that Mark himself thought any question by the Pharisees was a test, and therefore felt his readers should know as well. Jesus asked them what Moses said in the Torah, and they quoted Deut 24:1-4.

[235] Mark and Luke both have Jesus prohibit **divorce** under *any* circumstance; which is not shared by Matthew, who actually allows divorce, which is in line with the Torah and contemporary Jewish thoughts (See under Matt 19:3-12). Therefore, what are we to think of Jesus' saying above? The question has to be asked: Can one divorce their partner if they commit adultery (Matt) or not? (Mark and Luke). Some Christians argue that Matthew was wrong and the exception clause was added to his gospel, while others say that Matthew has more context than Mark; in Matthew's the Pharisees ask Jesus if divorce is permitted *for any reason*, as opposed to Mark's version above. See under Matthew 19:3-12 for more details.

The whole issue is rather confusing, and readers are left baffled as to what exactly did the Pharisees ask and what exactly did Jesus say. Readers of just Mark's Gospel, which include those early Christians who *only* had access to Mark's Gospel would have thought that divorce was never permissible, while those who had access to Matthew's Gospel would have divorced if their partners committed adultery.

The prohibition of divorce from Mark (and Luke's) Gospels, may actually originate from Paul who in his first letter to the Corinthians 7:27 forbids the Christian members from divorcing. It should be noted that both Mark and Luke were Pauline Christians (Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book) and as such followed the thoughts and ideas of Paul.

In verses 6 to 8 above, Jesus quotes Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 respectively to show that in the Garden of Eden, God made **man** and **woman** for the purpose of uniting. Many Christians will cite the above to illustrate that Jesus is abrogating the Torah Law, since he prohibits divorce while the Torah permits it. I believe in two ways to tackle this: The first is to remind our Christian friends about Matthew's version of the same account which we briefly mention above, which differs from Mark and Luke, to see that Jesus is not prohibiting divorce in its entirety, but permitted it in cases of adultery, which is inline with many of his contemporaries. Furthermore, the Essenes (authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls) also prohibited divorce, which they never considered to be a violation of the Torah Law.

The second could be that Jesus did disagree with the Torah in this part, he states it in verse 5 above, where **Moses** gives the commandment. However, Jesus may well have known that it was not an instruction from God, much like the entire animal sacrificial system which is recorded in the books of the Torah are not from God as argued in notes under Mark 11:15. This might just be another example of a part of the Torah which Jesus came to clarify; he discouraged divorce to such a degree that advised his disciples to only carry it out in extreme cases such as adultery as recorded in Matthew's gospel. Our author Mark, I believe got it wrong.

[236] Children are then brought to Jesus for him to **touch** and bless, but his disciples act like gate-keepers who begin to tell off the children and parents and keep them away from Jesus. However, the latter in turn instructs the disciples to leave them alone and permit them to come to him. For in these, his disciples can learn an important lesson; that one should become like a child to enter the kingdom of God.

This verse has caused quite a few debates amongst Christians; how is one to be like a child? In what way should they imitate a child to enter the kingdom of God? There are two

possible ways: that of complete reliance on God, as a child has complete reliance on their parents; or that one should be content with what one has, much like children are content.

[237] After Jesus blesses the children in the previous chapter, he sets off travelling to another place. Whilst doing so, he is met by a man who comes running to him and kneeling down, begs him to help him. He refers to Jesus as **good teacher**, a title illustrating Jesus' close relationship with God, along with his strong authority.

[238] Jesus objects to the title which the man gave him, primarily the adjective **good**, which Jesus did not feel was appropriate for himself, he felt that the adjective was only worthy of God Himself. The verse has often caused numerous problems for many Christians, as it suggests that Jesus is not God in any way, shape or form. Since it is *only* God who is worthy of being called **good**, and if Jesus was God, or at least part of the God-head, then he would have no issue in the man calling him good too, since he deserved it as well! However, as the above indicates, Jesus is completely divorcing himself from God in essence and only wishes God to possess the quality of being called **good**.

[239] Jesus then turns to answer the man's question. How must one inherit eternal life? I.e. how does one attain salvation? If you were to ask a modern Christian the same question, you would hear something like: "Believe in the divinity of Jesus and his death and resurrection. Have faith in these and you will be saved." However, that's not what Jesus thought.

Jesus' reply is that the man already knows; he knows the **commandments**, and then Jesus proceeds to list a few of them. It is not completely clear what the term commandments entailed, whether it was just the Ten Commandments, or all of the commandments listed in the Old Testament. The list provided by Jesus does not help either: the first about not killing comes from Exod 30:13/Deut 5:17 which is part of the Ten Commandments; the second about adultery is also part of the Ten Commandments from Exod 20:14/Deut 5:18; as are the third and fourth commandments about stealing and bearing false witness, which are in Exod 20:15, 16/Deut 5:19, 20. However, the fifth commandment about not defrauding is not part of the Ten Commandments, but may be a summary of Lev 6:1-7. The final commandment about honouring your father and mother may be considered to be part of the Ten Commandments in Exod 20:12/Deut 5:16.

All the above are traced to the Old Testament, most of which are the Ten Commandments themselves, but not all, thus showing that Jesus had in mind more than just the Ten Commandments, and most likely the entire Old Testament Laws. So that was the way to attain eternal life, one was to follow the Old Testament Laws and in essence... be a Jew! With which unfortunately our Christians friends disagree.

Bart Erhman makes the same point, and questions whether the above answer by Jesus would have been the same as Paul:

"Would Paul *also* tell him that if he keeps the commandments of the Law he will have eternal life? And that he can be perfect before God living in poverty for the sake of others? Is that how he can have salvation? Consider what Paul says in Galatians:

'We know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.... I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.' (Gal 2: 16, 21)

If Jesus is right that eternal life comes to those who keep the commandments of the Jewish Law, then how can Paul be right that no one can be made right with God by doing what the Law demands?" (Bart Ehrman, July 3, 2020, *Do Matthew and Paul Agree on the Matter Most Important to them Both?* <https://ehrmanblog.org/do->

[240] The man obeys Jesus and drops the **good** by calling him just **teacher** now. He also lets Jesus know that he already follows the commandments, but seeks more. This, too, serves a blow to the absurd opinion held by a few Christian groups that no one is able to follow the Law, and it was for this reason that God sent Jesus to do away with the Law. The above man is an example of a person living in the time of Jesus who was able to follow the Law; he had done so from his **youth**.

Some may argue that he was lying, or only deceiving himself; however, if the man was why then would Jesus **love him** as the very next verse states? Why would Jesus love a liar or a deceiver? If no one could possibly obey the Law, surely Jesus would have known that and called out the man for lying.

[241] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *taking up the cross* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible. It should be noted that the above passage has absolutely nothing to do with the cross, but rather reinforces the position that Jesus only came to teach the Torah and that was the way to God.

[242] Having complied with the Mosaic Law, the man wants more; he wished to be perfect and complete in every way. In order to do so, Jesus instructs him to **sell** all his belongings and **follow** him. This instruction not only permitted the man to gain favour with God through giving to the poor, but the other purpose was that the man is able to gain **treasure in heaven**.

There are two ways to interpret **poor** in the above; it could be the general poor people, in that Jesus told the man to give everything he had to charity and then follow him, or the other possibility could be that Jesus was being more specific. It may actually refer to the community and followers of Jesus. The *Ebionites* were early Jewish Christians who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but did not believe him to be a divine being, but rather a mortal man. They are described by fourth century Christian historian Eusebius:

“There were others whom the evil demon, unable to shake their devotion to the Christ of God, caught in a different trap and made his own. Ebionites they were appropriately named by the first Christian, in view of the poor and mean opinions they held about Christ. They regarded him as plain and ordinary, a man esteemed as righteous through growth of character and nothing more, the child of a normal union between a man and Mary, and they held that they must observe every detail of the Law – by faith in Christ alone, and a life built upon that faith, they would never win salvation.

A second group went by the same name, but escaped the outrageous absurdity of the first. They did not deny that the lord was born of a virgin and the Holy Spirit, but nevertheless shared their refusal to acknowledge his pre-existence as God the Word and Wisdom. Thus the impious doctrine of the others was their undoing also, especially as they placed equal emphasis on the outward observance of the Law. They held that the epistles of the Apostle ought to be rejected altogether, calling him a renegade from the Law, and using only the ‘Gospel of the Hebrews’, they treated the rest with scant respect. Like the others, they observed the Sabbath and the whole Jewish system, yet on the Lord’s Day they celebrated rites similar to our own in memory of the Saviour’s resurrection” (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, published by Penguin Classics in 1965, Book 3, 26:2).

The important part to take away from the above is the existence of the community, I would suggest the reader ignore the absurd explanation by the Church father Eusebius of how they got the name, it’s probably his own warped view. The name most likely originated from Jesus, as the Hebrew is אֶבְיוֹנִים (*Ebyonim*) means: *Poor Ones*. He speaks of the

poor throughout the gospels: Matthew 11:5, 19:21, 26:11; Luke 6:20, 14:13, 19:8; John 13:29.

As can be seen above, from the description of this community or sect, they considered Jesus to be a mortal man and not God; and they rejected the doctrine of Trinity, death and atonement of Jesus. They paid special attention to the Laws of Moses and fully abided by them. St Jerome of the fourth century was convinced that the Ebionites were the same as the Nazarenes (Letter 112), and it has already been established that the early Christians were called Nazarenes (see [Matthew 2:23](#)). The Ebionites rejected the *epistles of the Apostle*, that is the letters of Paul, and according to Epiphanius (another Church father) some would gossip that Paul was a Greek who converted to Judaism in order to marry the High Priest's daughter, and then apostatised when she rejected him (Panarion 16:9).

It is likely that this in fact was the original community set up by Jesus himself. They followed Jesus closely, in that they were Jews and held very little (if any) of the doctrines of the later Church. For their rather 'Islamic' view of Jesus they were declared heretics by the later Church. They are named directly by Jesus in the gospels, and they revered James the brother of Jesus, who headed the Jerusalem Church after Jesus' departure. All of this points to the obvious, that this was the community of Jesus, which practised what Jesus really taught; which was completely at odds with the teachings of Paul and for this reason were shunned and declared heretics.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, fourth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has also spoken about the Ebionites in his classic book; *'Christianity – A Journey from Facts to Fiction* (p.132). The reader is recommended to read the chapter on the early followers of Jesus, for a more detailed exposition of the identity of the Ebionites.

To return to the passage being commented on, the rich man found the sacrifice too hard to do; he found Jesus' advice impossible for himself for he had gained much wealth in his life.

[243] Jesus is amazed at the rich man's attachment to his wealth, for he had shown such promise, but when the advice was given against his wealth, he shrank away and left Jesus. The latter then warns his disciples of the dangers of wealth.

[244] It was a common understanding among some of the Jews that wealth in fact was a gift from God. Those who were wealthy were at times seen as the favoured ones of God, who had done good and as such were seen as good in God's eyes and thus rewarded in this very life. It may be for this reason why the disciples were amazed at the saying/warning of Jesus.

[245] After two verbal warnings, Jesus then moves onto a visual illustration of the difficulty for the rich to enter heaven. The phrase about a **camel going through the eye of a needle** was likely to have been revelation from God, since it is repeated in the Holy Quran but with a slightly different context:

“Verily, those who rejected our signs and showed arrogance towards them, the gates of heaven will not be opened to them nor will they enter Paradise until a camel passes through an eye of a needle...” (7:41).

[246] For the disciples this is exceedingly shocking! At face value, their worries seem rather silly; if the rich cannot be saved, who can? Well, not everyone is rich, so no doubt it will be the poor and not the well-off who will be saved. Yet, in view of the general idea that the rich were the favoured ones of God, then the question makes more sense. If the rich, the favoured ones of God cannot enter heaven, then who else can be saved?

[247] Jesus answers that with human judgement; no one can be saved, for all men will then deserve to be punished and destroyed, but with the judgement of God, anything is

possible. In essence, Jesus is speaking of the grace of God, that even the most persistent sinner can be saved. A similar saying is recorded in the Holy Quran:

“And if Allah were to seize mankind for their wrongdoing, He would not leave on it (the earth) a living creature, but He gives them respite till an appointed term, and when their term comes, neither can they delay it an hour nor can they advance it.” (16: 62)

[248] The response of the rich young man is in complete contrast to the call of the first disciples according to the gospels, particularly Peter, who when called dropped **everything** and **followed** Jesus. This is further pointed out when Peter complains about his and his fellow disciples' position, all of whom dropped everything in their lives to follow Jesus.

[249] Peter's question has given Jesus the chance to explain the wonderful benefits of what they did; their rewards will obviously be eternal life in the life to come. But those who dropped everything for Jesus, who forsook family and their previous occupations for Jesus' sake and the sake of the gospel, these will in turn receive a **hundredfold** for their sacrifices. They will be given the like by God; new families who will readily accept them and new lands in which they will work. But there is another thing added, that they will have to undergo persecution with all the new aspects of life.

[250] Mark has Jesus speak the words in relation to the rich and poor. In contrast to the common understanding that the rich are blessed by God and the poor are not, Jesus has turned it upon its head and says the opposite, that it is the poor who are blessed and will enter the Kingdom of God whilst the rich will not.

Jesus probably did speak these words, but whether it was in the above context is uncertain, since the saying does not seem to fit well with the rich and poor context Mark places it in. Both Matthew and Luke record the saying but in different contexts; it is likely that Mark had the saying in front of him, but without any context, and simply put it above. The placement of the saying in the Lukan context (Luke 18-24-30) seems more accurate, along with Matthew 20:16.

[251] For details on the alleged resurrection prophecy see [Mark 8:31-33](#).

[252] The above speaks of the two **sons of Zebedee**, after Jesus' (or rather Mark's) prediction of his death, come up to him and ask him to carry out a request which they wish to ask of him. The reader may recall the wild and thoughtless statement of Herod Antipas after seeing Herodias dance in front of him: “Ask me what you wish, and I will give it” (Mark 6:22) which is something similar to the statement of the two brothers above; which also may point to the wild and thoughtless request.

[253] The request of the two brothers assumes that Jesus will sit on the throne of glory in the Messianic Age to come, or may refer to the hereafter where Jesus again sits on the throne of **glory**. In another work: Parables of Enoch (45:3), the author speaks of the Messiah sitting on the *throne of glory*, thus the belief may have been present among some of the Jews. The seat on the right hand is of the highest rank and the one on the left hand the second highest. The brothers aren't bad, they simply wished to be the closest disciples of Jesus, which is reasonable.

[254] Jesus' initial reply saying that they do not know what they ask shows the thoughtlessness of the request. For the first request, sitting at the right hand of Jesus, i.e. to be the highest ranked disciple, one has to **drink** the **cup** Jesus **drinks** from, which is a metaphor to imply destiny. Thus to be the highest ranking disciple, they would have to follow Jesus and undergo much of what he went through. They must preach like he does and carry on his mission; he suffered in his life, so too, must they suffer. Likewise the **baptism** of Jesus, which does not refer to the baptism by John the Baptist, but refers to the destiny, just like the cup he was to drink.

[255] Jesus prophesies that they will drink the cup he will drink, i.e. that they would carry on Jesus' mission and would come face to face with much suffering like Jesus had gone through. However, the strength of their faith and what their real intentions are behind their good actions are only known to God. Thus Jesus does not know who will be his closest companion in the Afterlife.

To argue that the prophecy was that they would die just like Jesus died is not wholly correct, since James was put to death via the sword (Acts 12:2) and not the cross, and John is spoken of as dying a natural death at an old age. Jesus' statement is thus in regards to how they were to live the rest of their lives; that it would be a life preaching his message and one of suffering like he had endured.

His latter statement is a flat refusal of their request and is entirely accurate, for Jesus does not have the authority to carry out their request; such a request can only be carried out by God, who has the ultimate authority and knowledge of what position one has in the next life. This itself serves a severe blow to the viewpoint that Jesus was divine, since he admits he does not have the authority or power to carry out their request; only God does. This directly implies that Jesus is not God, but only His servant and prophet.

[256] The author Mark added this in to show the ill effects of the request, (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p498) they wished to be placed among the closest to Jesus, beyond the other disciples, such as Peter. Naturally, such a request may have been met with some sort of jealousy.

[257] Jesus is contrasting with the Gentile system of authority; the leaders subjugate the people and exercise authority over them, making the people their servants and slaves. But this is not to happen with his community, for when the disciples are in authority, they are to be humble and serve the others; these will then be the greatest among them. Jesus himself claims that he did not come to be served, but to serve others, like all other prophets of God.

However, the final statement that the son of man came to give his life as ransom would not have been from Jesus, but rather the author of the gospel. In the earlier verses, Jesus refers to himself in the first person (I), whilst suddenly here he switches to the third person (son of man), which seems awkward and unnecessary in the same setting and conversation. As will be shown later in this work, Jesus never did expect to die on the cross as an atonement for mankind. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

[258]

The title **son of David** was one of the Messiah titles, see under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details regarding the concept of the coming Messiah.

[259] **Important Words**

Ραββουνι (*Rabboni*) is transliterated from the Hebrew; *a heightened form of Rabbi (teacher), used as a title of great honour and reverence, my lord, my master* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[260] Whilst en route to Jerusalem, Jesus seems to walk past a blind man on the road (Matthew records the same event, but has two blind men instead of one in Mark, see Matthew 9:27-31 and Matthew 20:29-34), who after hearing that it is Jesus begins to cry out the Messianic title **son of David**! This eventually gains the attention of Jesus who calls him over, asks him what he wants and then abides by his wishes to heal him. The man immediately receives his sight, like magic. Whether it was an immediate healing is uncertain, but what is certain is that the faith of the man healed him; see under [Mark 6:5](#) for more details.

[261] Jesus' entry into Jerusalem follows his curing of the blind man. He does not enter Jerusalem at this point, but rather stops just before the city at two villages; **Bethphage** and **Bethany** which lay east of Jerusalem. The mention of the **Mount of Olives** is interesting and may have some symbolic meaning behind it. It is prophesied in the Old Testament book of Zechariah, in Chapter 14 that nations will gather and wage war on Jerusalem; initially they will be successful but then the coming of the Divine Warrior will turn the tables. The appearance of this Warrior will be on the Mount of Olives.

[262] Jesus stops and sends **two** of his **disciples** into a village opposite; most likely Bethphage. According to the above text, Jesus predicts that they will **immediately** see a tied-up **donkey**, which they are to bring back. In verse 3, the disciples are instructed that if anyone challenges them, they are to reply that the donkey's lord is in need of it and will bring it back.

Verse 3 could be translated in two different ways, the first is as done so by the WEB above, the second could be *His Lord has a need*. If the latter, it could imply that the donkey may have belonged to Jesus, or that it belonged to a follower of Jesus, as it would be very unlikely that the owners or villagers would permit foreigners to enter their village and take one of their animals.

This in fact make more sense and is more believable: that Jesus had followers in the village with whom he had a prior arrangement about borrowing an animal to ride into Jerusalem. With this in mind, the reply of the disciples to any challenger would make perfect sense; the disciples would explain that Jesus was in need of it, and the owners would have then permitted the taking of the donkey, since the arrangement would have already been agreed upon.

The text makes it very clear that Jesus did not wish to walk into Jerusalem, but rather ride an animal. This was relatively common in the first century, where the rich would enter Jerusalem riding on donkeys to publicise their higher statuses. Thus the entry of a religious leader on a donkey would come as no surprise. Since it was Jesus' intention to proclaim his Messiah status publicly in Jerusalem during the Passover, his entering in such a fashion would have been expected.

[263] The practice of laying one's garments down in the path of another was a sign of immense respect in ancient times. The practice is spoken of in the Old Testament, where "every man of them took his garment, and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet, and proclaimed, 'Jehu is king'" (2 Kings 9:13). It was also common in Roman traditions: "And when the time of the military service of Cato ended, he was sent away with no blessings, which is common, no praises, but with tears and embraces, the soldiers throwing their garments down for him to walk..." (Plutarch, *Vit. Cato Minor*. 12).

[264] Important Words

The word Hosanna derives from two Hebrew words יָשָׁא (*Yasha*) meaning *save; deliverance; help* (The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs), and אָנָּא (*anna*) meaning *beseech thee* (Ibid). Thus combined, they formed part of the prayer of David in Psalms 118:25: "*Save us, we beseech thee, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech thee, give us success!*" Mark does not translate the word above in his text; with the above translation in mind, the text would mean: "*Save us, we beseech thee! Blessed be the one coming in the name of the Lord!*"

[265] According to Mark, some of the crowd who were with Jesus went ahead of him and cried out the above, whilst others who were following did the same as well. The cry, as noted in the Important Words section denotes some degree of saving, which was one of the roles of the Messiah. The latter part of the verse also shows that the crowds had the Messiah in mind.

[266] This verse is more explicit: the crowd cry out blessings on the **kingdom of David** which is coming, which would no doubt refer to the Messianic kingdom. According to

many beliefs of the Jews in the first century regarding the coming of the Messiah (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for a fuller explanation) the Messiah would bring about the end of the enemies of the Jews and a heavenly kingdom, which in turn may be referred to as the Messianic or future Davidic Kingdom.

Thus the above story as portrayed by our author Mark was dangerous, and very unlikely to have happened: To proclaim loudly that the Messianic kingdom is about to come, meant the end of Roman occupation and would definitely have gained the attention of the Roman authorities. A famous scholar believes that the above is most likely an exaggeration; he argues that the hailing of Jesus as King and the proclaiming of the coming of the Kingdom would have led the Romans to round up Jesus and his disciples and have them executed. It is more likely that only a few murmured the above rather than the whole crowd (E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 1985, p.306).

[267] After the Triumphal Entry in Jerusalem, Jesus is a little **hungry** and approaches a **fig-tree** that he sees in the distance. He desires some of its fruit, but after finding none, he curses it. The account is difficult for many Christians since it portrays Jesus as being rather unreasonable. Perhaps Jesus was used to the Galilean countryside where the climate was less harsh than in Jerusalem, and therefore expected fruit on the fig-tree almost all year round. But this would still not explain the harsh and inappropriate behaviour of cursing the tree. Some Christians have argued that the above is in fact the fig-tree parable in Luke 13:1-9, made literal, yet there are difficulties in this approach as well since the parable in Luke is about patience, which Jesus does not display above.

Other Christians have taken the allegorical approach; the above account is linked to the lament of prophet Micah in 7:1: “Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the vintage has been gleaned; there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig which my soul desires.” The lament continues and goes on to complain about the lack of righteous people on the land. In Mark, prior to the cursing of the fig-tree, Jesus is hailed as the Son of David and welcomed by many Jews, yet the leaders of the Jews all reject him. Thus the fig-tree above would signify the Tree of Jesse; the Jewish people. The lack of fruit shows this lack of faith.

The question still remains: Did Jesus really curse the fig-tree? Based on the allegorical approach above, it seems unlikely that he did. It is possible that Mark or his own source mixed up or combined a number of different events; Jesus probably did get hungry, approach a fig-tree, but found none and walked away. In another instance, he may well have spoken of a fig-tree, similar to the parable in Luke 13 and cursed those people who lacked faith. Mark or his source probably combined the two events to make the above. Otherwise, the reader will be left with a very poor view of a great prophet of God. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) too questions the authenticity of the above curse and doubts that it ever happened. (*Fountain of Christianity*, p.16)

[268] Some readers may be wondering what were animals doing in the Temple? One of the purposes of the Temple was *sacrifice*, which was a fundamental element in both Judaism and Christianity. In Christianity, God is Just; which actually implies that He is unable or unwilling to forgive sins *without* some sort of punishment being exacted, or the shedding of blood. For this reason, Jesus came to the world and offered himself as sacrifice for the forgiveness of mankind. This isn't entirely the case with Judaism, in which sacrifice was an important part of life, which according to the Old Testament, God Himself had ordained, along with the sacrifices and hereditary Priesthood.

There were many types of sacrifices in the Torah, some of which are:

- Burnt Offerings in which entire animals were burnt resulting in *a pleasing odour to the Lord* (Lev 1:9).
- Peace Offerings expressing thanks and gratitude (Lev 19:21).
- Sin Offerings to atone for the sins of breaking any of the commandments in the Torah (Lev 4). For the rich, animals were to be sacrificed but for those unable to afford an animal, then grain was acceptable for the Sin offering (Lev 5:11). Note: Many Christians argue that blood was essential for Sin Offerings, this isn't correct.
- Childbirth Offerings (Lev 12)

There were many other types of sacrifices, many of which involved animals or grains. The animals which were to be sacrificed had to be unblemished (Lev 3, 4), that is with no

obvious defects. You couldn't sacrifice a maimed animal or one which was about to die; that defeated the purpose for the Jews.

Many times, particularly on the annual Passover, Jews would come from other countries, and it would have been risky to transport the animals all the way. If a rich family wanted to sacrifice a goat for example, but en route it tripped and damaged its leg, it was no longer acceptable. Enter the people in the Temple who would sell animals, which were unblemished. It was needed and which also explains why there were animals in the Temple.

The question that needs to be asked and discussed is; did God really ordain the sacrifice of animals? Especially burnt offerings, where the entire animal was burnt. What was the point? The meat was wasted, and it seems very... cultic and pagan.

In fact, there are reasons to doubt the tradition that God ordained sacrifices altogether. Not only is the custom rather barbaric; in that God demands the killing of animals and their blood to 'purify' His people, but the Holy Quran totally rejects the idea:

"Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him." (Holy Quran, 22: 38).

It is true that animals are sacrificed in the Islamic celebration of Eid-ul Adhia, at the end of the annual pilgrimage. The verse quoted above is from a chapter called Hajj, but God is making it explicitly clear that the sacrifices have nothing to do with atonement nor is it a method to *reach* Allah. Rather, it is only in remembrance of Prophet Abraham's obedience. In which he thought he was instructed by God to sacrifice his son. Muslims around the world carry out the animal sacrifices to recall this and learn from such obedience.

Sadly, the concept of sacrifice has taken sinister tones by societies who did so to reach their respective gods. This is also supported by the fact that the concept of sacrifice, purifying by killing animals and even humans existed in numerous societies and kingdoms *prior* to the Old Testament and Prophet Moses. Ancient Egypt back in the year 4000 BCE used to carry out animal sacrifices (Flores, Diane Victoria, 2003, *Funerary Sacrifice of Animals in the Egyptian Predynastic Period*).

Probably the most important ritual within Judaism was *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, in which the High Priest would lay their hands on a goat "and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness." (Lev 16:21). This ritual is most crucial for our Christian friends as well, since it was this ritual which Jesus replaced, in that he took on the sins of mankind instead of the goat.

However, this ritual too *predates* the Old Testament and Prophet Moses! Texts and tablets found in the Ebla archives in 1975 speak of a goat brought into a palace with a silver bracelet around its neck which is then used to 'purge' the area. The impurities within the palace would then be carried away by the goat. (Ida Zatelli, "*The Origin of the Biblical Scapegoat Ritual: The Evidence of Two Eblaite Texts*," 1998).

The Hittite rite for purifying the king and queen, recorded in the mid-second millennium BCE (just prior to Prophet Moses) has a similar concept, in the 'Ritual of Samuha' texts found in Turkey states:

"*The exorcist releases one bull for the king, but one cow, ewe, and nanny goat for the queen's implements—all as a nakušši "sent-away"*) -- and *then* declares as follows:

"Whatever evil word, false oath, curse, (or) *impurity* has been committed in the sight of the deity—may these nakuššis carry them *off* from before the deity. May the

deity and the ritual patron (=king and queen) be purified of these things!" (Rene Lebrun, *Samuha, foyer religieux de l'empire hittite*, 1976, p. 125, 132).

One scholar observed a number of other pagan rituals which were in essence the same as the Day of Atonement ritual: The Ancient Greeks would make use of the *pharmakus*, that is a human scapegoat. In this ritual, a human is chosen, consecrated, cursed, beaten and then driven out of the town. Similarly in Athens as well, two prisoners would be chosen, who would be whipped with fig branches and also driven out. The citizens would believe that they were purifying the city of disease or curses (Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 1999, p.33).

What does the above signify? What it means is that the Jewish sacrifices and Day of Atonement rituals all originated from customs and rituals from pagans around them, including those in Babylon (J.D Shams, *Where did Jesus Die?* 2014, p.122). What that also means is that Jesus' death and sacrifice, the idea that he died for the sins of mankind, to purify them is *also* of pagan origin.

In fact, there are numerous passages in the Old Testament which actually speak against sacrifice:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.

For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.'" (Jer 7:21-22)

The Jewish Encyclopedia cites numerous examples where Prophets of the Old Testament criticised sacrifice:

"The attitude of the literary prophets toward sacrifice manifests no enthusiasm for sacrificial worship. Hosea declares in the name of Yhwh: "*I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of Yhwh more than burnt offerings*" (Hos. vi. 6; comp. ib. viii. 13; ix. 3, 4; xiv. 3). Amos proclaims: '*I [Yhwh] hate, I despise your feast-days; . . . if you offer me burnt offerings and your bloodless offerings, I will not accept them nor will I regard the thank-offerings of your fat beasts, . . . but let justice flow like water*' (Amos v. 21-24, Hebr.; comp. iv. 4, 5). He goes so far as to doubt the existence of sacrificial institutions in the desert (ib. v. 25). *Isaiah is not less strenuous in rejecting a ritualistic sacrificial cult* (Isa. i. 11-17). Jeremiah takes up the burden (Jer. vi. 19, 20; comp. xxxi. 31-33). *He, like Amos, in expressing his scorn for the burnt offerings and other slaughtered oblations, takes occasion to deny that the fathers had been commanded concerning these things when they came forth from Egypt* (ib. vii. 21 et seq.). *Malachi, a century later, complains of the wrong spirit which is manifest at the sacrifices* ("Mal. i. 10). Ps. l. emphasizes most beautifully the prophetic conviction that thanksgiving alone is acceptable, as does Ps. lxxix. 31, 32. Deutero-Isaiah (xl. 16) suggests the utter inadequacy of sacrifices. "*To do justice and judgement is more acceptable to Yhwh than sacrifice*" is found in I Sam. xv. 22 (Hebr.) as a censure of Saul; and gnomic wisdom is not without similar confession (Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 3, 27; xxviii. 9; Eccl. iv. 17). *Some passages assert explicitly that sacrifices are not desired* (Ps. xl. 7-9, li. 17-19). Micah's rejection of sacrificial religion has become the classical definition of ethical monotheism (Mic. vi. 6-8)." (Emil G. Hirsch, Kaufmann Kohler, M. Seligsohn, Isidore Singer, Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, Joseph Jacobs, *Sacrifice*, The Jewish Encyclopaedia, The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopaedia.)

Thus it can be seen that traditions did exist within the Old Testament against sacrifice, along with traditions which condoned sacrifices. It seems that the authors of those sections which speak highly of sacrificed (the Priestly sources) were most likely the creation of men, rather than divinely authorised instructions.

Therefore, after presenting the argument that sacrifices are of pagan origin and not from God, this now casts serious doubts on the entire Gospel of Paul and Christianity. If the sacrificial system was not of divine origin, this means that Jesus's death and atonement are also *not* of divine origin. What this comes down to then, is that the whole of Christianity, sadly, is based on barbaric pagan practices; animal/blood sacrifices, which our Christian friends have progressed to human/god sacrifices. Something which Allah,

the true God detests.

[269] The cleansing of the Temple is portrayed to have happened at the end of Jesus' life in the Synoptic gospels (first three), yet in John's Gospel it occurred at the very beginning of his ministry. It is difficult to reconcile the two, resulting in many scholars rejecting the historical accuracy of the event completely, whilst others have attempted to argue that he cleansed it twice!

So which is correct? It cannot be argued with certainty either way; those scholars who argue for the accuracy of the Synoptic gospels say that such a serious offence would have resulted in the priests taking quick action against Jesus; his arrest happened just a few days later. Yet in John's Gospel he is permitted to continue his preaching for a further two years and visit the Temple again and again subsequently. Also, to cleanse the Temple would cause such an uproar, that Jesus would not have done so without a strong following and an already successful mission, which would have only happened at the end of his ministry in Judea as portrayed by the Synoptic gospels and not at the beginning as in John's.

Why did Jesus cleanse the Temple? As already explained above, the concept of animal sacrifice was most likely borrowed from the pagans, and thus Jesus, being a Prophet of God, would have been against it. This might explain why he cast out all those selling animals; it had nothing to do with the Temple! The Temple was rather a **house of prayer**.

[270] The above quote is a combination of Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. In regards to the Isaiah quotation: "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples," some Christians have tried to argue that Jesus had Gentiles in mind when quoting the text. But the context of the verse is regarding those people who observe the commandments of God, the people spoken to are eunuchs and foreigners, both of whom can join the Temple on condition that they observe Sabbath regulations and the covenant, i.e. they become Jews. It is in this context that the above quotation is made, thus it is nothing to do with Gentiles or the Temple being a house of prayer for Gentiles, but rather those Gentiles who convert to Judaism and become Jews no more. The second part of the quote seems to point to the priests not doing their appointed jobs properly; instead of inviting people to God, they are instead encouraging theft and lawlessness.

[271] After Jesus causes trouble in the Temple, he obviously attracts negative attention from the leading authorities who wish to get rid of him.

[272] Whilst going back into Jerusalem at dawn, Jesus and his followers see the **fig-tree** that is **withered**. The readers will recall earlier when Jesus was hungry and cursed the same fig-tree due to its not bearing any fruit; see Mark 11: 12-14.

[273] Here Jesus stresses prayer. The readers may recall that Jesus already attributed the exorcism of a demon to prayer (see Mark 9:29). He then allegorises the trust and faith one should have in God; he explains that if one was to truly believe, then even mountains would move under their instruction. Naturally this has caused many Christians trouble, those who interpret Jesus' miracles literally are then asked to be consistent and interpret the above literally as well, which of course is difficult, since no Christian in history has displayed such a miracle.

The only answer is to allegorise the above, much like many of Jesus' miracles: the interpretation may be that the mountains refer to hard, rock like people who will never budge from their beliefs. Jesus stresses that you are able to move such mountains with prayer and faith. Such a teaching is echoed in the Quran;

"And WE subjected the mountains and the birds to David to celebrate God's praises with him" (21:80)

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah explained that the birds and mountains above mean:

“...that big men (mountains) and highly spiritual men (birds) glorified God and sang Divine praises along with David. And if according to the verse, the mountains and birds were subjected to David there is nothing extraordinary in the mountains and the birds being subject to his control as at several other places in the Quran not only mountains and birds but all other things in the heavens and the earth – the sun, the moon, the stars, the day, and the night, the animals, the birds, the rivers, the seas, the winds, the clouds etc. are stated to have been subjected to man (2:165, 7:55, 22:38 & 45:13-14)”(*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 4, p.2105).

[274] The teaching is about **forgiving** those who have wronged one before they stand for prayer, so that when standing in front of God, the worshipper will have no rancour in their hearts. A similar saying on forgiveness is also stressed by the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who told a story instructing the same: Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “There was a merchant who used to lend the people, and whenever his debtor was in straitened circumstances, he would say to his employees, ‘Forgive him so that Allah may forgive us.’ So, Allah forgave him.” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 34, Number 292, made available on www.sunnah.com).

[275] Textual Variant

This verse is not present in the earliest manuscripts, such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and most scholars believe it to be an explanatory expansion made by a later scribe, copying from Matthew 6:15 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.194).

[276] Mark takes a break in the text to discuss the withered fig-tree, and then returns to the story of returning to the Temple where he is confronted by the priests.

[277] This is the first clash Jesus has with the authorities in Jerusalem; the question is most likely linked to his overturning of the tables in the Temple. The action of course may have caused the authorities to worry due to the fragile nature of the crowds during the festivals; a small disturbance could lead to riots, which would then lead to bloodshed as the Romans would have come down severely on the crowds.

[278] Jesus counters their question about his authority to do **these things**. He asks them about their opinion of **John the Baptist**. Religious authorities generally are the first to oppose prophets of God. To which, John was no exception, as can be seen in both Matthew (3:7) and Luke (3:7) where they (the Pharisees and Sadducees) met the rough side of John and are called *brood of vipers*. Since the priests decide to play safe and not answer Jesus’ question, Jesus in turn refuses to answer theirs and successfully evades them.

[279] Jesus then begins a parable; the **them** in the text would refer to the chief priests and the scribes and the elders spoken of in 11:27. The parable is about a man who plants a vineyard, builds a fence and a tower round it and rents it out to some tenants. The vineyard in the parable most likely represents Israel (Isaiah 5:7).

[280] The owner of the vineyard sends many **servants** to collect the rent: the first is beaten and sent away; the second is treated worse, hit on the **head** and sent away; and the third is **killed**. Thus the violence increases as more and more servants are sent.

[281] The interpretation of the parable is as follows: the owner of the vineyard is God, as mentioned earlier the vineyard is Israel, and the tenants renting the vineyard are the Jewish leadership. The servants who are sent to collect the rent are the prophets of God; they were often sent to the Jewish people to preach and guide them, but often they would be rejected, many were beaten, and some may even have been killed. Finally, the last of the prophets sent to the Jewish people was Jesus himself, who often referred to

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himself as the son of God as a title (see under [Mark 3:11](#) for details of the meaning of the title). Thus the owner sends his son to the tenants, meaning that God sends His son (not literal son) to the Jewish people. But like the tenants, the Jewish people not only reject him but also kill him (much like the previous servants). In turn, what will the owner do? He will come and destroy these people and give the vineyard to another people who will pay their rent. Likewise, God will come and destroy the Jewish leadership and many of the Jewish people, and take away their land or kingdom and give it to those who will acknowledge God.

The prophecy of the vineyard being taken away is true, since after the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people, God did punish them severely decades later in 70 CE when Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed by the Romans. The kingdom was then handed over to another people, and these are most likely to be the Muslims who came later; since Divine help, aid and prophets have ceased to come to the Jewish people due to their continuous rejection of the prophets of God and the final straw was when they rejected Jesus the Messiah. In turn, the vineyard/kingdom was given over to the Arabs (progeny of Ishmael) and a prophet, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent to them, who in turn responded favourably.

Some Christians may argue that the above parable speaks of the killing of Jesus, so he must have died in real life as well. However, the parable/prophecy was spoken before the cross ordeal and seeing some of the previous prophets being killed by the Jewish leadership, his own cousin being killed as well, Jesus may well have thought that he, too, would achieve martyrdom at their hands. But this does not mean that he himself was killed by them, as will be shown later in this book. Furthermore, the above parable has no resemblance to the concept of atonement, since the *son of the owner who is killed does not go to his death knowingly and willingly*. Nor does the reaction of the owner (shock and horror) reflect the 'plan' of God the Father of sending his 'son' to die for the sins of mankind. Rather the owner/God is angry and shocked that His son is killed, and it is clearly not what He intended to have happened.

[282] This is a quotation from Psalms 118:22. Mark is quoting the Greek Old Testament. The builders are again the Jewish leaders who reject the stone, which in turn becomes the corner stone, the most important in the building; according to the Markan text above the stone is Jesus, but this is not so according to Luke 20:9-19.

[283] This passage indicates that the scribes and priests understood the parable as being one against themselves, perhaps from the vineyard reference in Isaiah. It is unlikely, however, that they would have sought to have him arrested just for speaking against them, but it may have added fuel to their anger and intensified their efforts to have him arrested and disposed of.

[284] **Pharisees and some of the Herodians** come praising Jesus and admit that he teaches well, even if it offends any person of high standing. Such praise is to encourage Jesus to be freer and open in his teachings, and to not fear anyone. They ask him about taxes; whether they should be paid to the Romans or not. The question shows that at the time, there may have been certain groups of Jews who were against paying any tribute to the Romans, particularly the Zealots, who had always wanted to be a separate and independent nation and not under the rule of Rome. As mentioned under [Mark 1:1](#), some of the beliefs of the Jews in the first century regarding the Messiah are that he would wage war against the enemies of Israel and free Israel from any foreign rule. Thus, if Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, he may have had some support from the Zealot group who anxiously awaited the coming of the Messiah to fulfil their dreams.

Thus, by asking Jesus this particular question, the Pharisees and Herodians wished to entrap Jesus; if Jesus answered in the affirmative; that one should pay tribute, then he would incur hostility from every patriotic Jew and in particular the Zealots. However, if he declared that it should not be paid, then this would reveal his true colours as a rebel and the Roman authorities would then have arrested him, since the leading Jews were themselves unable to do so.

[285] Important Words

δηνάριον (*denariown*) – noun accusative singular neuter of δηνάριον (*denarion*) meaning: *denarius, a Roman silver coin equivalent to a labour's average daily wage* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[286] Jesus seems to have figured out what his questioners were trying to do; the account shows that he was witty and clever enough to beat them at their own game. The reader can visualise him flicking the **coin** back to the one who gave it to him as he replies, forcing his questioners to decide what belonged to **Caesar** and what to **God**. It further shows that Jesus was not a rebel, as some scholars have suggested, since this would have been a perfect opportunity to teach that taxes should no longer be paid to the Romans. It is not clear who marvels at Jesus' response; it may have been the crowds, but they are not mentioned anywhere in this account and thus it may in fact point to the questioners who were sent by their leaders.

[287] There is not a great deal of information about the **Sadducees**. The name itself probably came from the Priest name Zadok (who lived in prophet David's time) in Hebrew; Tsaddoq. The Sadducees were opponents of the Pharisees and generally belonged to the wealthier classes of the Jews; many of the Priests of the Temple were Sadducees, and likewise much of the Sanhedrin (Jewish Council) comprised of Sadducees. What differentiated them most from the Pharisees was their rejection of the Oral Law and the afterlife.

[288] The Sadducees approach Jesus and pose a question; the style and well-structured format of the question suggests that they may have used this question as an argument against other Jews, such as the Pharisees in their debates. They utilise the text of Deut 25:5, where if brothers live together and one of them dies leaving behind a widow with no children, the widow is not to marry outside her husband's family and one of the husband's brothers is to marry her. Thus the Sadducees ask Jesus an almost impossible question, giving a hypothetical question which would bring to light serious contradictions with belief in the afterlife and the above mentioned Law.

[289] Whilst replying in a witty and evasive manner when asked by the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute, Jesus turns to this question very seriously. He explains that the understanding of the resurrection by the Sadducees is very wrong and that it will not be a literal resurrection but rather a spiritual one, where the resurrected will be like angels. The concept resembles the Jewish pseudepigraphal work of 2 Baruch which was probably written a little later than Mark's Gospel. It too speaks of a spiritual resurrection, where those obedient during their earthly lives will be raised up to look like angels (2 Bar 51:5). The concept was also present in the apocryphal Book of Watchers, the first part of the Book of Enoch, a Jewish work likely to have been composed around the third century BCE. In it, it states: "But you from the beginning were made spiritual, possessing a life which is eternal, and not subject to death for ever. Therefore I made not wives for you, because, being spiritual, your dwelling is in heaven." (15:6-7).

[290] The final two verses seem to have been appended to the above, since Jesus has already given a convincing answer to the Sadducees. He argues that the earlier prophets are not dead, but rather living, and where else can they be living? Only in the hereafter. Jesus goes on to explain that since God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the *present* tense, that these prophets are still alive and not dead, otherwise God would have said He *was* the God of Abraham. It is a strong argument, but it is doubtful whether such an explanation would have worked on the very literal thinking Sadducees.

[291] After Jesus successfully silences the Sadducees, a scribe who was listening approaches Jesus and asks him which **commandment is the greatest**. The scribe seems genuine, really wanting to know what Jesus considers to be the most important commandment.

[292] Jesus responds to the scribes by citing Deut 6:4-5; this is part of the Shema prayer recited daily by many Jews. To the Markan readers, it is a definite assurance of the

oneness of God and directly opposes any concept of the Trinity. The second part of the citation establishes the relationship between man and God, that man is to love God in all circumstances.

[293] Although the scribe only asks for the greatest commandment, Jesus gives the second greatest commandment; he quotes from Leviticus 19:18, which can be interpreted as a form of the Golden Rule (See [Matthew 7:12](#), [Luke 6:31](#)). Although the commandment states that one should love one's neighbour, the word neighbour would refer to a fellow Israelite. The first quotation establishes the relationship between man and God whilst this second commandment is to establish the relationship between man and his fellow human beings. In agreement with Jesus is Rabbi Akiva of the first century; according to Spira on Lev 19:18 he states that it is the greatest principle of the Torah.

[294] The scribe agrees with Jesus and repeats his words affirming them. Yet, he makes an interesting addition to Jesus' answer; that to love God and your neighbour is more than burnt offerings and sacrifices. This may be an echo of Hosea 6:6: "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings." The scribe seems to have understood the real purpose of the Law and man's purpose in life. Some form of sacrifices were necessary for the consumption of meat, but had little value in religious terms, see under [Mark 11:15](#) for a much more detailed discussion of sacrifices and how they were borrowed from pagans.

[295] Jesus recognises the wisdom of the scribe and gives him the glad tidings that he is close to the **kingdom of God**. It is uncertain why others were nervous or dared not ask Jesus any further questions, since this last exchange between Jesus and the scribe seems to be a positive one, which should have encouraged others to come forward to give their own opinions.

[296] Strangely, Mark continues from the rather positive outcome with the scribe in the previous passage to an an outburst attacking scribes now. Jesus asks a rhetorical question, questioning the interpretation of some of the scribes regarding their opinion on the Messiah. As mentioned under [Mark 1:1](#), some of the Jews in the first century may have held the belief that the Messiah would be a king modelled on the Kingship of David and as such gave the Messiah the title of 'son of David'. Jesus seems to be questioning this.

[297] Jesus carries on and gives his argument; he quotes Psalms 110:1: 'The Lord says to my lord...' In Hebrew 'Yahweh says to Adonai...'; the former being the name of God in Hebrew, whilst the latter can refer to God, but is also a title addressing a superior (Gen 23:6), a king (1 Kings 1:2), or even a husband (Amos 4:1). The second sentence about the enemies is from Psalm 8:6.

The problem is that Psalm 110 was never interpreted messianically in the first century. Of all Jewish texts written around the time, none use this Psalm when discussing the Messiah; it appears to be interpreted as such only by Christians, they are the first to utilise the text and argue that it spoke of the Messiah. Therefore, I do not believe that Jesus made the above comment, rather these are the words of either Mark or some other Christian who has placed it in Jesus' mouth.

However, even if we accept for argument's sake that the above was correct, what is the point being made? That the Messiah could not be a descendant of David, because David calls the Messiah Lord? Is that the point? It's not very convincing, since many children outdo their parents when it comes to piety, wasn't David greater than his father Jesse? Furthermore, the argument is false; for according to Christians, Christ *is* the descendant of David! Thus why Mark places these words in Jesus' mouth is a mystery.

[298] Jesus continues with his attack on the scribes; this time it is regarding their hypocrisy, which is very surprising since a few minutes earlier he admitted that the very scribe who began the conversation was very close to the kingdom of God! Thus this may hint at some sort of shuffling done by the author Mark. Scribes were the professional

interpreters of the Law in the Synagogues. They therefore held a position of honour, were respected and thus occasionally dressed in such a way, with **long robes**. For such a position, they were often given the best seats in congregations. In the **market places**, wanting to be greeted and recognised also displayed some desire to be honoured.

The scribes are also accused of devouring the houses or wealth of widows. The latter were often seen as the vulnerable members of society in ancient times; having lost their protector, they were often powerless with none to fight their cases. There was limited protection from religious and constitutional Laws. The charge against the scribes may be due to them being made trustees of the widow's property, and in return they may have demanded a fee, which Jesus may have disapproved of. Or they may have completely mismanaged the properties causing severe financial losses to the widows.

[299] Mark continues; the setting has changed though, as Jesus is now sitting and watching people putting money into the Temple treasury or more likely some sort of collection box to which they were contributing. As usual, the rich were coming forward and placing in much of their wealth.

[300] Important Words

λεπτά (*lepta*) – noun accusative plural neuter of λεπτόν (*lepton*) meaning: *thin, small tiny, small coin, mite, a small copper coin with a fraction of a cent* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the word as *small brass coins*, in that *she cast in two small brass coins*. I have opted for a simpler and clearer translation of the word as above.

κοδράντης (*kodrantais*) – noun nominative singular masculine of κοδράντης (*kodrantes*) meaning: *quadrans, a Roman copper coin worth one-quarter of an assarion, equal to two lepta, farthing, penny, cent* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the word as *quadrans coin*, as in *which make quadrans coin*. I have opted for a simpler and clearer translation of the word as above.

[301] After watching many of the rich putting in much money, a poor widow comes along and casts in just **two small copper coins**. This causes Jesus to summon his disciples and proclaim that she in fact has put in more than the rich people. At the outset this seems unbelievable, since Mark has just said that the rich put in much money while the poor widow cast in just two small coins, but verse 44 explains why: it is due to her putting in **all** her livelihood while the rich put money according to their abundance of wealth. The saying seems to be authentic, since it condones sacrifice in proportion to one's means and is very much in line with Jesus' teachings about true sacrifice for the service of God, see under Mark 8: 34-9:1 - "If Any Man Would Come after Me...".

[302] After commenting about the poor widow, Jesus leaves the Temple, and whilst doing so is shown by his disciples the splendid **buildings**, which may indicate that many of the disciples were from the countryside and had little association with urban life. Rather than agreeing and marvelling as well, Jesus turns to them and predicts the destruction of the Temple. The prediction seems to have been fulfilled in 70 CE, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. He states that **'There will not be left here one stone on another'**, pointing to complete destruction.

The above prophecy seems accurate and is likely to have been made by Jesus himself. The fact that the prediction was not exactly fulfilled as suggested by the text shows that it is authentic. The words of Jesus show complete destruction, that no one stone will be left on another, yet when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, much of the Temple walls were left standing; many of the surviving stones are large and weigh between two and five tons, but others, especially the corner stones are much larger. Often when prophecies are written after the events unfold, i.e. fake prophecies, they often fit the event exactly, which is not the case with the above one made by Jesus, and thus it is most likely to be authentic. E.P. Sanders made a similar point in his book *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 1995, p.257.

[303] After predicting the destruction of the Temple, the leading disciples approach Jesus privately and ask him when all these things will happen. Rather than providing a time frame or even answering their question, Jesus discusses the end of days. He warns them, beginning with false Messiahs, who will claim such in the near future and lead many people astray. Jesus' prophecy proves true, since Josephus reports of a certain claimant, Simon Bar Kokhba, who claimed to be the Messiah in 132 CE, and who gathered a large following and waged war on the Romans but was soundly defeated. Since then, there has been no shortage of other claimants of the Messiah.

[304] Furthermore, Jesus predicts the rise in the number of **wars, earthquakes and famines**. It echoes Ezekiel; 'A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in the midst of you; a third part shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them' (5:12).

The Holy Prophet of Islam also predicted the end of days with a number of signs; the coming of the Messiah, the appearance of the smoke (maybe from wars) and insects (diseases) [Sahih Muslim, Book 41, Number 6931].

The time of the Promised Messiah would be when **nation shall rise against nation**, i.e. the number of wars would drastically increase. **Earthquakes** too will increase, or natural disasters and **famines**. Elsewhere, Jesus predicts the darkening of the sun and moon, stars falling from heaven and the very powers of heaven shaking (Mark 13:24-27).

Analysing each point, the increase of wars, it can be argued that the twentieth century saw the most devastating wars in the history of mankind in the form of the two World Wars. The number of earthquakes too have increased in the twentieth century compared to the centuries prior (<https://sos.noaa.gov/datasets/earthquakes-of-the-20th-century/>). As regards the darkening of the sun and moon, this too happened in the end of the nineteenth century to correlate with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), full details are written in the notes under Mark 13:24.

Thus the above all point towards the end of the 19th century being the time of the second coming of Jesus, and this is exactly what happened. The coming of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian happened just as was prophesied by both Jesus and the Prophet of Islam. He fulfilled the above prophecies along with those presented in the hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

[305] Important Words

See note in Mark 1:1 for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion/gospel*). The WEB translates the word as *Good News* which is correct, however I have opted for the above, see notes on next verse for a fuller explanation.

[306] There seems to be an unnatural break here; verse 10 seems very out of place, and without this verse the entire passage flows smoothly. Why Jesus would tell them that the gospel must be preached to all nations in between his warnings is odd and makes little sense in the above context. Both Matthew and Luke use Mark as their source when they write about the same account, and both omit this verse, indicating that the verse may well have been added to the Gospel of Mark at a later date.

Geza Vermes adds that the passage has a certain Pauline flavour, since Paul did reminisce about his many imprisonments and beatings by the Jews and Gentiles. He too saw the successful preaching of the gospel to 'the full number of the Gentiles' as a climax of the process of preaching leading to the end of days (Rom 11:25). (*The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*, 2003, p.294)

[307] The predictions of what the disciples will go through again are doubtful. Many scholars hold the view that these words were placed in Jesus' mouth after the events had actually taken place. The predictions are 'too accurate', since this is exactly what happened after Jesus: many of his disciples were beaten and taken to the governors, even Paul

is included, who was beaten and imprisoned many times (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

The idea that personal ties will be severed in the end of days existed well before Jesus. In the apocryphal Book 4 of Ezra, the author speaks of "...all friends shall destroy one another" (5:9); and "At that time shall friends fight one against another like enemies..." (6:24). Whether Jesus said the above words cannot be ascertained with certainty, but the idea existed well before him. Those who endure, i.e. persist and do not lose faith, it is these whose souls will be saved.

[308] The **desolating sacrilege** comes from Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11, where it refers to the pagan altar erected in the Temple in 168 BCE, by Antiochus Epiphanes (Peakes). Mark states that it is **standing where it ought not to be**, this did not mean that there was a pagan altar in the Temple at the time of Jesus, but may well refer to a type of prophecy perhaps. But the problem is that no altar was placed in the Temple after Jesus, so if it was prophecy, it failed.

It is likely that the author or his source understood when reading the prophecies in Daniel that sometimes in the end of days, a pagan altar or perhaps even the anti-Christ would come and stand at the Temple. Perhaps this idea was added to Jesus' own prophecies concerning the end of days, or the days when Jesus' second coming would occur. It is in those days, that Jesus advises his people that they should flee to the mountains.

[309] Jesus moves onto further advice and cries for pity for those who are caught up in the end of days. For such trials and sins have never occurred from the **beginning** of time and not even the elect (chosen ones) of God would have lasted had God not shortened those days with the second coming of Jesus. The despair spoken of seems to be far worse than mere wars and famines, which have happened since the beginning of time. What Jesus may be referring to is the trials and trouble caused by the anti-Christ, or Dajjal in Muslim literature, which even the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sought protection from (Sahih Muslim, Book 004, Number 1216). Such will be those days, that even the most pious of people will get caught up in the lies and deceit of the Anti-Christ.

There are numerous interpretations of the identity of an anti-Christ, it is certain that it is not one single person, but rather a group of people. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) wrote extensively about Dajjal, he says:

"Dajjal is not the name of one man. According to the Arabic lexicon, Dajjal signifies a group of people who present themselves as trustworthy and pious, but are neither trustworthy nor pious. Rather, everything they say is full of dishonesty and deceit. This characteristic is to be found in the class of Christians known as the clergy. Another group is that of the philosophers and thinkers who are busy trying to assume control of machines, industries and the Divine scheme of things." (*The Essence of Islam*, 2005, Vol 3, p.280)

The Christian clergy were one type of anti-Christ as explained by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), for "There have been many Dajjals and there may be more to come." (Ibid, p.281). There are a number of interpretations of the identity of the Dajjal or anti-Christ:

1. "If Dajjal is taken to mean someone other than the misguided preachers of Christianity, this would entail a contradiction, because the very hadith which indicate that the Dajjal will prevail over the earth in the latter days, also indicate that in those days the power of the Church will overwhelm all religions. This contradiction can only be solved by affirming that the two are one and the same." (Ibid p.280)
2. "Today Dajjalayat is spreading its web like a spider. The disbeliever with his disbelief, the hypocrite with hypocrisy, the alcoholic with his drinking, and the Maulavi with his preaching without practice and with his black heart, are all weaving the net of Dajjalayat" (Ibid p.284)
3. "It refers to the people concerning whom it is written that they would make great inventions in the latter days and will try to interfere with God's creation. According to the commentators [of the Holy Qur'an], the people mentioned here are actually the Dajjal." (Ibid, p.286)

Thus the Dajjal or anti-Christ is rather a group of people who cause deceit and confusion around the world, which in the modern times are the Christian nations with their material powers. The destruction of the Dajjal or anti-Christ as recorded in the hadith is not to be taken literally, "Remember, it is also written about the Messiah—the bearer of spiritual blessings, whose advent in the latter days has been promised to the Muslims—that he would slay the Promised Dajjal. But it does not mean he will actually kill him with a gun or a sword. What it means is that he will do away with all deceitful innovations in religion." (Ibid, p.285)

[310] Many scholars have argued that the above verses are a doublet of verses 5-6 of the same chapter, which in fact may be the case, since the message is the same; that of warning of false claimants to the second coming of Jesus (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.613).

[311] The second coming of Jesus is elaborated further here. The **sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light**, may refer to some sort of eclipses which would occur at the time of the coming of Jesus. There is an Islamic tradition which in fact speaks of the coming of the Imam Mahdi (Guided Imam) in the latter days which also speaks of eclipses of the sun and moon: "Of our Mahdi there are two signs which have never taken place ever since the Earth and the Heaven came into existence. One is that in the month of Ramadan the moon shall be eclipsed on the first of its nights and the sun in the middle of its days; and such a sign has never occurred ever since the creation of the Earth and the Heaven" (Dar al-Qutni, vol. 8, p.188). This great prophecy has in fact been fulfilled in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi in the late nineteenth century:

"If the lunar month is reckoned from the first sighting of the lunar crescent, the dates on which a lunar eclipse can occur are the 13th, 14th and 15th, and the dates on which a solar eclipse can occur are the 27th, 28th and 29th. The prophecy thus requires that the lunar eclipse should occur on the 13th Ramadhan and the solar eclipse on the 28th Ramadhan.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (on whom be peace) of Qadian, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat received his first revelation regarding his appointment as a the Divine Reformer in 1882. In obedience to the Divine command he declared that he is the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the 14th century of the Islamic era. In 1891 he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He asserted that Almighty God had sent him to give spiritual life to the people. But the contemporary theologians rejected his claims and he met a storm of very violent opposition.

The prophesied eclipses then occurred over Qadian on the specified dates of Ramadhan. The lunar eclipse occurred after sunset on March 21st, 1894 (13th Ramadhan 1311 H) and the solar eclipse occurred on the morning of Friday April 6th, 1894 (28th Ramadhan). The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) then wrote the book Noorul Haq, (Light of Truth) Part-II, in which he declared that these eclipses were Divine Signs in support of his claim. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also drew attention in this book to several properties of the eclipses which make the signs very impressive." (Saleh Mohammed Alladin, Retired Professor of Astronomy, Osmania University-Hyderabad, India, *The Truth About Eclipses, Review of Religions, May-June, 1999*).

[312] The above verses speak of Jesus' second coming, the source of which seems to be Daniel 7:13, where it describes a vision of Daniel: 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven; there came one like a son of man'. For an in depth analysis of Daniel 7:13, please see under [Mark 2:10](#), which concludes that the original text of Daniel did not have the Messiah in mind when discussing the figure of the clouds. It is therefore, very unlikely that the above would have come from Jesus, the prophecy of him coming on clouds would most likely have been the words of the author or at least his source, which may be a distortion of Jesus' original words describing his second coming. Or the author may simply have added the clouds and glory imitating the text of Daniel.

It may be worthwhile to note the Islamic tradition about the second coming of Jesus, the traditions vary and are numerous, but it is important to understand the correct interpretation. In the hadith (saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam) Jesus is described as coming from God and performing certain acts such as killing the pig, breaking the cross and abolishing the Jizya (tax paid by non-Muslims living in lands governed by Muslims), along with killing the Dajjal or anti-Christ. Interpreting these literally would result in an absurd mission of a prophet of God (him breaking crosses and killing pigs), the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) has explained the absurdity of such interpretations:

“What will he do after he descends from heavens? It is mentioned in the ahadith that he will get married and will have children. We cannot say whether he will look for a wife first or will he perform the other tasks. The tasks attributed to him as his agenda show that the reformation of lost souls would be none of his concern. His primary objective would be to kill pigs. After exchanging pleasantries with the mullahs, he will rush into the jungles and kill all the pigs. He will zealously chase them on land and sea and will not leave a single pig in this world. After he has done away with them, the mullahs will acclaim the praise of Allah that now the Messiah will enlighten them about God and spirituality, but the Messiah will refuse saying all his tasks are far from complete, since he has yet to kill the Antichrist...

After exterminating the entire breed of swine, the Messiah would turn his wrath to the one-eyed Antichrist and will at last overpower him. Then the ulema will again praise the Lord and joyfully declare that the Messiah has accomplished this feat and now it is their turn and the Messiah will reform them. But the Messiah will again excuse himself saying that he has yet to break the cross, and then he will head towards the churches, and will break each and every cross in sight; then he will invade the privacy of Christian homes and will break every cross he finds. He will even get into their wardrobes to search for the cross that is worn around the neck as a decorative piece and the images of the cross embroidered or printed on garments. In short, he will not leave a single cross on the face of the earth. Having accomplished this arduous task, he, if still unmarried, will get married, have children, and finally say goodbye to this earthly abode. The mullahs are not at all amused by such literal rendering; they consider it quite sensible.” (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahid, *A Review of the Pakistani Government's "White Paper": Qadiyaniyyat—A Grave Threat to Islam*, p.21-22)

As can be seen, it is best to interpret it allegorically, such that the pigs signify filth and the breaking of the cross the end of the belief of atonement etc. If Jesus did in fact speak of himself coming in glory and power, with angels, again it would be best to interpret such prophecies allegorically, much like the hadith; otherwise we are left with a god-like Jesus coming in the future, judging people and dispatching angels to the ends of the world gathering the pious etc. This may have been the belief of the later Church, but definitely not of Jesus, since it relies on a poor interpretation of the vision of Daniel.

[313] Continuing with the notion of the second coming, Jesus advises his disciples that they will know when it occurs, just like they know that summer is approaching when the leaves of trees sprout.

[314] These two verses are possibly one of the strongest proofs that according to the gospels themselves, Jesus was a man and not God or the son of God as believed by many Christians. In verse 30 Jesus firmly believes that his second coming would be *imminent*; that he would very soon return within the lifetime of his disciples. However, this is clearly incorrect, since Jesus *did not* return within the lifetimes of the disciples. The end of days *did not* happen as the above states, so did Jesus get it wrong?

Christian interpreters have attempted to argue that Jesus was in fact speaking about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple when he stated the above in verses 14-23. However, this is far-fetched, since Jesus had moved on from that and went on to speak of the end of days, about his second coming.

Therefore, we are left with only two options; we believe that Jesus did not say the above and that it was made up by the early Church. The problem with this is, why on earth would the early Church make up a false prophecy? The only possibility is that the above *is* what Jesus thought about his return from the east. Jesus knew full well that the vast majority of the Jewish population were not living in Judea, and since he came for the Jewish people, he knew that he would have to travel outside Judea. Yet he still expected to

return to his homeland and family after his travels outside. It would most likely refer to this, when he speaks of his return within their lifetime.

The above must have been a different tradition to the other second coming of Jesus traditions that Mark had access to, and it is likely that Mark simply misunderstood and grouped them all together. Any other interpretation would imply that Jesus was bluntly wrong and mistaken.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explains the two prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus:

“(1) the Promise of the coming in the latter days, his coming is of a spiritual character, and resembles the second coming of Elijah, he has already appeared in this age, and it is I, the writer, a servant of humanity, who has come as the Promised Messiah, in the name of Jesus (on whom be peace). Jesus has given the news of my coming in the gospels. Blessed is he who, out of respect for Jesus, ponders with honesty and truth over my coming and thus saves himself from stumbling. (2) The other kind of prophecies regarding the second coming of Jesus mentioned in the gospels have, in reality, been mentioned as evidence of the life which, by the grace of God, remained intact during the experience of the Cross; God saved His eminent servant from death on the Cross...” (*Jesus in India*, 1908, p.39).

[315] This verse, too, has caused many problems for the Church. It limits the knowledge of Jesus, the son of God, and only gives the knowledge of the **hour** to God. If Jesus is to be God in the flesh, how is it that he is unaware of the coming of the hour? Ancient writers would complain that the above text was tampered with by their opponents; e.g. St Ambrose, the fourth century Bishop of Milan in his Exposition of the Christian Faith, Book V, Chapter 16:192 complains that it was the Arians who corrupted the text of Mark above by adding the words **nor the son**.

More modern Christians will often argue that Jesus, being God could not be ignorant of anything, but the ‘Divine wisdom’ which dwelt in him communicated itself to his human soul according to what was necessary. In other words, the Divine nature in Jesus kept hidden the knowledge of the hour to the human nature. I will let the readers decide on whether that makes sense to them or not.

A similar saying is echoed in the Holy Quran, but this time about the hour of the day of resurrection rather than the second coming of Jesus:

“They ask you about the Hour; ‘When its appointed time is?’ Say; ‘Its knowledge is only with my Lord, none can manifest its time but He. It weighs heavy on the heavens and the earth; it shall not come upon you but all of a sudden.’” (7:188).

The above therefore places Jesus on the level of humans and angels; below God and subservient to Him, not His equal in any way shape or form. Because of the difficulty this verse put the Church under, this verse is definitely authentic, much like the expectation of Jesus’ coming within the lifetime of his disciples.

To drive the point even further, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, second Caliph of the Promised Messiah states:

“The above quotation is clear on the point that the Messiah (peace be upon him) denies fore-knowledge of the future while such knowledge is the attribute of God the Great. When therefore the Messiah says that he has no knowledge of the hidden and no knowledge of the future events, he admits in other words that his use of the expression Son of God in respect of himself is not in its literal sense, but in a metaphoric sense; that is to say all that he means thereby is that he is a favourite of God.” (*Did Jesus Redeem Mankind?* 1960, p.105)

[316] This entire passage is about the second coming of Jesus and of keeping awake and alert regarding the timing of the event. Verse 33 indicates that no one knows when the second coming of Jesus will take place; the previous verse (32) actually shows that it is only God who knows when it will take place. Returning to verse 33, the latter part also goes against any kind of calculation or attempt to pinpoint a particular date for when Jesus will return; something numerous Christian groups have attempted in recent years.

[317] Following on from the initial warning, Jesus gives a parable to further illustrate his point. The man spoken about is Jesus himself who goes on a journey, most likely to preach to the surrounding Jews after the crucifixion, and he is warning his disciples that he will soon return, and that they should be on their guard and not be caught off-guard when he does, for they do not know when he will return.

[318] It was at the Passover festival where the chief priests and leading Jews wished to arrest Jesus by stealth; secretly for fear that some of the people who knew of him may join in with his disciples and seek to protect Jesus, thus causing trouble which may erupt into a riot, which would have caused Roman intervention.

[319] **Important Words**

δηνάρων (*denariown*) – noun genitive plural neuter of δηνάριον (*denarion*) meaning: *denarius, a Roman silver coin equivalent to a labour's average daily wage* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[320] **Important Words**

See note in [Mark 1:1](#) for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion/gospel*). The WEB translates the word as *Good News* which is correct, however I have opted for the above, see notes on next verse for a fuller explanation.

[321] The above account is spoken of in all four gospels (Matt 26:6-13, Luke 7:36-50, John 12:1-8), but *all* are slightly different; Luke in my opinion is the most accurate. The woman above seems to have been an uninvited guest, since **she came in** to Jesus presumably from outside the house. The ointment is valued to around **three hundred denarii** (A denarius was a days' wage for a labourer), which indicates that the woman was very wealthy. She broke the container of ointment over Jesus' head, anointing him. This action naturally annoys the disciples who think it a waste of money and that it could have been given to the poor. However, Jesus excuses her and informs his disciples that she is preparing him for his burial.

However, what does that mean? It was not the practice of the Jews to anoint people for burials with extremely expensive ointments, ointments which are worth a year's salary for most of the workers! Rather such an action is performed in preparation of some joyous feast (Judith 10:3). Plus, Jesus wasn't buried anywhere, nor did he expect to die any time soon. For these reasons, it can be said with certainty that the response of Jesus was just made up (fabricated) by the author.

See John's version for a complete overall picture and how the whole event was most likely made up by the early Church.

[322] Many people have understood **Judas Iscariot** to be part of the anti-Roman revolutionary movement, known as the Zealots because of his surname. See Mark under [3:19](#) for more details. The gospel writer does not indicate what exactly motivated Judas to betray Jesus; perhaps he didn't know or felt it wasn't important. Matthew in his gospel indicates that it was for money (Matt 26:14-16), yet this is unlikely if the assumption is made that Judas was part of the Zealots as his name indicates. If he was, then it is likely that he did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Since the Zealots were revolutionary, in that they wished independence from Roman rule, they would have longed for the coming of the Messiah, particularly the warrior Messiah as depicted by so many texts of that time (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details of the expectation of the Messiah).

Judas, too, would have longed for the Messiah to come and lead the Jews to battle against the Romans to rid them of their rule. Yet, once he realised that Jesus was not a warrior Messiah, he may have felt betrayed, and may have convinced himself that Jesus was a false Messiah. He therefore would have abandoned him, and may in turn felt it his patriotic duty to report him to the Jewish authorities. While it is impossible to determine one's intentions, particularly a man who lived two thousand years ago, all that one is able to do is lay out assumptions and possibilities of why Judas may have left and betrayed Jesus, or at least with the aid of the authorities exposed Jesus to the rest of the Jews as a false Messiah.

Recently, a gospel known as the Gospel of Judas was discovered (available on <https://www.gospels.net/judas> to read), which was likely to have been written by Gnostics (early Christian groups which moved away from the orthodox teachings, but instead had a strong emphasis on divine knowledge) sometime in the second century, who saw Judas as their hero. The reason for the betrayal was loyalty; that Judas did as he was commanded by Jesus himself, who only wished to die to escape this world. However, it is generally acknowledged that this document does not bear any resemblance to history. The concept though, given in this gospel may be accurate if we accept the Christian narrative; Judas is essential in his role. Without Judas, Jesus would not have been arrested and would not have been crucified. His whole mission, according to our Christian friends would have failed. No wonder that some Gnostic Christians later considered him a hero!

Historically, is it safer to assume that he simply betrayed Jesus due to the fact that he believed Jesus was not the Messiah? It is likely some Christians later came to think and realise that without him, there would not have been a death and resurrection of Jesus and created the account of Judas being in on the plan with Jesus etc.

[323] The disciples take the initiative and ask Jesus where he would like to eat the **Passover** lamb. The verse identifies the Last Supper as the Passover meal, and thus places the event on the 15th Nisan, which is the month in the Hebrew calendar equivalent to around March/April. The sacrifice of the Passover lamb was done on the afternoon of the 14th Nisan, and since the Jewish day begins after sunset, the lamb was eaten in the evening beginning the 15th Nisan.

[324] Just like in Mark 11, The Triumphal Entry, where Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey which he sends his disciples to go and fetch for him, he likewise sends two disciples to go into Jerusalem this time and locate a man who will lead them to where he and his disciples will eat the Passover meal. And just like in the Triumphal Entry, it is likely that Jesus had made prior arrangements with a follower who would have agreed to have Jesus eat the Passover meal in his house; Jesus therefore sent his disciples to find this man or his associate who would lead them to the host.

[325] Once the Passover meal was prepared Jesus then turns to his disciples whilst eating and informs them that one of them is going to **betray** him. How did Jesus know that he was to be betrayed? Most Christians will argue that it was due to his supernatural knowledge; this may not be far off since it could be due to Divine revelation. Yet, it is more plausible that Jesus was simply informed by some of his other disciples; the reader should recall his discussion with a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Nicodemus (John 3:1), who in turn became a secret follower of Jesus. It is likely that after Judas visited the Jewish priests planning to have Jesus arrested, Nicodemus being present as well would have immediately sent a message to Jesus informing him of the plot.

[326] This is difficult to interpret; after being informed that one of the close followers of Jesus will betray him, the disciples simply ask around with **Is it I?** Why on earth would they do that? Didn't they know that *they* weren't betrayers? We would expect some strong, perhaps violent reaction; perhaps interrogation to find the betrayer. But no, they all looked at each other rather pathetically and asked each other if they *themselves* were the betrayers. What sorry lengths our author has gone to in portraying the closest companions of Jesus!

[327] It is not clear what the words **son of man goes as it is written about him** mean, if Jesus is speaking about scripture predicting his death then sadly he is very wrong, since

there is absolutely no reference in any Old Testament text, nor any Jewish text for that matter about a Messiah dying and coming back to life (the most popular text often quoted by Christians is Isaiah 53; see under [Matthew 8:17](#) for a detailed analysis of this text). This part of the verse is definitely the creation of our author Mark or some other later Christian, or even the creation of Paul (1 Corinthians 15:4) who seems to have made up the fact that such prophecies existed in the Old Testament.

There is another difficulty with the above passage; the final statement condemning the betrayer is relatively harsh in that it is better if he had **not been born**. Had Judas not been born, there would have been no betrayal, Jesus would not have been arrested or crucified, which in turn would have ruined the plans of God and Jesus according to the majority of Christians. Thus it was essential that Judas carry out such an action; out of all the disciples, his role was probably the most crucial. This is exactly what the recently discovered Gospel of Judas records; that it was in accordance with Jesus' instructions which led Judas to betray him.

However, the above can only be argued if the traditional Christian narrative is accepted; that Jesus came to the world in order to die for the sins of mankind as the perfect sacrifice. Do away with this viewpoint, and the words of Jesus in Mark's Gospel make perfect sense: Jesus did not come to die, but to preach the message of God; anyone who hinders this mission (by betraying him to the authorities), it is better if that person was not born!

[328] After foretelling the betrayal of Judas, Jesus supposedly continues with his meal. The disciples seem to forget that they have a betrayer amongst them as well.

[329] The above account is referred to as the Eucharist, synonymous with the *Lord's Supper* or *Last Supper*. Readers may be surprised to know that the gospels are not the first to speak of the Last Supper, Paul in fact beats them to it in his first letter to the Corinthian Church (11:23-25); which is near enough identical to the above text of Mark. What is particularly interesting is that when reading Paul's letters, one finds that at times when he instructs people or teaches them he often states his source, i.e. where he learnt the story or tradition from. In most cases it would be the disciples of Jesus. But when discussing the *Last Supper*, Paul's source is *the Lord Jesus*, which would mean he had direct revelation from Jesus about the event; i.e. he did not learn about the *Last Supper* from the disciples of Jesus, but from Jesus himself.

Unfortunately, or rather fortunately, that is not an acceptable source for Muslims, or for historians for that matter. As will be shown in later commentaries of Paul's letters, he himself seems to have created many of the doctrines of modern Christianity. Many of which he did not learn from the disciples of Jesus, but (as he claims) from Jesus himself. Not only was Jesus elsewhere at this time, but the teachings of Paul completely contradict Jesus'. For these reasons, the above event *was created by Paul himself* and is historically untrue.

Some Christians may argue that Paul and the gospel writers inherited the above story from a common source; meaning they both heard of traditions which spoke of the above story and wrote it down in their gospels and in Paul's case; his letter to the Corinthians. But the problem with that view is that again, Paul does not say he heard it from somewhere, but rather his source is Jesus himself.

Why did Paul create the above account? That is impossible to truly answer, but it may be due to his own education in Greek history and knowledge of pagan practices, where the eating of the flesh of their gods was practised to gain their power and courage. The Egyptian Book of the Dead has the following passage: "Unas hath eaten the Red Crown, and he hath swallowed the White Crown; the food of Unas is the intestine, and his meat is hearts and their words of power...Unas hath eaten the whole of the knowledge of every god..." (The Papyrus of Ani, 518-521, By E.A Wallis Budge, 1994, p.94-95).

In the commentary of the above passage, the author of the book (E. A. Wallis Budge) argues that the eating of the flesh or the drinking of the blood of another living being was believed to enable a man to absorb the nature or life of the one he was eating or drinking. It is linked with the practice of drinking the blood of enemies; a practice he indicates was common among Arab tribes before the advent of Islam (Ibid p.95). Thus the notion, the pagan notion of eating and drinking the blood of their gods and enemies was

common and was probably borrowed by Paul.

[330] This issue of Jesus drinking wine is often brought up and discussed, mainly by Muslims since the drinking of wine is strictly prohibited in Islam. The question that naturally arises is: 'Did Jesus actually drink wine?' There is nothing in the Old Testament which prohibits the drinking of wine; the only people or group who did abstain from wine were the Nazirites and details of their vow can be found in Numbers 6.

The Old Testament does however condemn drunkenness (Deut 21:20 and New Testament; 1 Peter 4:3), but as already mentioned, the outright prohibition is not mentioned anywhere. On the contrary, money could be spent in Jerusalem "for whatever you desire, oxen, or sheep, or *wine* or *strong drink*, whatever your appetite craves; and you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household" (Deuteronomy 14:26). Thus the drinking of wine was not seen as a sin in Judaism.

Furthermore, Jesus at one point is accused of being a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:18-19); indicating that Jesus may have been seen drinking alcoholic wine, which many argue was the norm in his days, as it was much easier to preserve and keep pure than other drinks.

However, others will argue that what he was drinking was simply unfermented (non-alcoholic) grape juice. Examples throughout the Bible can be found where God forbids certain people (normally the pious and pure) not to drink wine. John the Baptist is said not to have drunk any wine (Luke 1:15), likewise was Prophet Aaron instructed not to drink any wine when he was to enter the tent of meeting (Leviticus 10:8-11). From this, many have said that Jesus, too, did not drink wine. As such both sides can be argued, and its conclusion will be left to the reader.

[331] After The Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples sing a hymn; most likely a recital of some of the Psalms of the Old Testament. They then go out and proceed to the Mount of Olives.

[332] Jesus is quoting Zechariah 13:7, a prediction that his disciples will abandon him. However, this is doubtful, as it is more plausible that the words are of the author who is trying to justify the rather pathetic reaction of the disciples when they all abandon him when he is arrested a little later.

[333] This verse is out of place and has led many scholars to argue that it was an insertion into Mark's Gospel (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p.670). Without it, the text reads more smoothly. Either way, it is quite important since it prophesies Jesus' meeting with his disciples in Galilee after his supposed resurrection. It is likely that Jesus did speak similar words, but after he survived the crucifixion. He must have sent a message to his disciples to meet him in Galilee. In the current context it is not only out of place, but is also a prediction which seems to have failed, since nowhere in the Gospel of Mark does Jesus see his disciples in Galilee after his 'resurrection'.

[334] After prophesying their abandonment, Peter (nicknamed the Rock) protests and argues with Jesus that he will never leave him. In turn, Jesus gives another prophecy about Peter specifically, about his supposed denial three times. Did Peter really deny Jesus three times? Was he a coward as portrayed by the gospels? See under [Mark 14:53-72](#) for more details. As will be shown, he was no coward but acted on selfless grounds, with the intention of saving Jesus. The above are likely to be the words of the author himself, only wishing to show the cowardice of Peter and perhaps explaining why the disciples abandon Jesus.

[335] The Garden of **Gethsemane** seems to have been a place where Jesus and his disciples would often meet and where Jesus possibly found some sort of retreat and privacy to pray to God. The word itself probably means *oil press* (Metzger, Bruce M. and Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. 1993, p. 253).

[336] Important Words

ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι (*ekthambeisthai*) – Verb, present passive infinitive, of ἐκθαμβέω (*ekthambew*) meaning: *to be utterly amazed or astonished; to be alarmed or greatly disturbed* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[337] This is the first time in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus displays the emotions of fear and distress. It is very unlike the traditional heroes of stories who often face death with bravery and composure. In the above, Jesus is greatly **astonished** and **troubled**, his soul is saddened to death (verse 34), particularly after what he has learnt and is anticipating what he is about to go through. These verses illustrate the *humanness* of Jesus, and have often caused difficulties for Christians who believe in his divinity and his sole purpose of coming to the earth to die for the sins of mankind. Had that been Jesus' mission, his sole mission, then one would naturally expect him to go willingly to the cross, but the above shows the complete opposite.

However, it should be kept in mind that the verses are speaking of Jesus, a prophet of God who never before has displayed fear for his own life in the gospel accounts. And this is no exception, Jesus did not fear for his own death, since a prophet would never fear the meeting of his Lord. Jesus was fearful of his mission and his flock; his disciples. After learning of the plan of the Jewish priests; that they planned to have him charged and executed, Jesus was naturally concerned and distressed, since being charged as a criminal and publicly executed would have meant that he was (God forbid) a false prophet. This is because one of the tests of Prophethood in the Old Testament is just that: "the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die" (Deut 18:20). And once he has been executed, the Jews were to "hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God" (Deut 21:22-23).

This is exactly what the Jewish priests desired; that he should be executed in public, which would serve two purposes: a warning to others not to follow in such a man's footsteps, since they, too, would meet a similar fate; and secondly and more importantly that Jesus was not the Messiah of God. Since the Messiah could not be executed (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for the prophecies of the Messiah; none of which point to him dying before carrying out his mission). Once all the Jews who visited Jerusalem for the Passover would have witnessed such a spectacle, they would have returned home and when asked of their travels and news, would have informed their homes and villages about Jesus, whom they would have declared a false Messiah.

Dying as a criminal would have also disheartened his disciples and led to them abandoning Jesus, since they, too, would have been familiar with the prophecies of the Messiah and would have abandoned the belief that Jesus was from God. It would lead to a wasted life, and the failure of his God-given mission.

We disagree with our Christian friends and argue that Jesus' prayer was answered, the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) elaborates further:

"Christians demonstrate by their belief that the prayer of Jesus (as), which was offered the entire night, went unheard. What could be more unblessed than this? How could one expect that such an individual could be an intercessor for others? I do not recall ever having had the opportunity to pray for two hours and then having had my prayer go unaccepted.

In contrast, however, the condition of the son of God, rather, God himself (God forbid) is such that he himself prayed all night long, weeping, nay, wailing and screaming, while asking others to pray for him as well. He continued to say: 'O God! Nothing is impossible for you. If possible, do take away this cup,' but his prayer was simply not accepted." (*Mulfuzat*, published in 2019, p.215)

In fact, the Promised Messiah goes on to explain the incompatibility of the above passage and the Christian doctrine of atonement:

"If anyone were to suggest that Jesus (as) came for atonement and this is why his prayer was not accepted, I would say that when he knew that his purpose was to atone for the sins of man, then why such cowardice? If an official was sent on a duty to deal with an outbreak of plague, and he said that he was being sent in harm's way, and requested to be sent somewhere else, would not such a person be deemed foolish? Now when the Messiah knew that he had been sent only to atone for the sins of man, then what was the need for such lengthy supplications? Was the matter still under deliberation as to whether he would be required for atonement or was this matter already settled? Therefore, whether it is one blemish or two, or even countless blemishes, can such a one be God? Let alone God, such a person cannot even be considered a great individual." (Ibid)

[338] Jesus informs his disciples to stay there and keep a watch out for him, since he knew that his life was in danger and that at any minute now, Jewish soldiers would come to arrest him.

[339] Important Words

ἐπίπτεν (*epipten*) – Verb, imperfect active indicative, 3rd person singular of πίπτω (*piptō*) meaning: *to fall or drop; to throw oneself to the ground as a form of worship* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). It should be noted that the above verb is in the *imperfect* tense, implying that the action performed was a repeated action in the past, not just a one-off as the WEB implies when they simply say *he fell*. Thus Jesus was falling to the earth, many times, giving the impression that he was praying, very much like Muslims pray; repeatedly bowing and placing their faces on the ground.

[340] Jesus leaves his disciples and goes a little further (for privacy) to pray to God intensely. The hour is approaching for Jesus' arrest and almost certain death, and if this was the sole purpose of Jesus coming to the world, as preached by many Christians, then one would expect Jesus to pray for thanks and for God to quicken the coming of the hour to enable Jesus to fulfil his destiny. Yet, the complete opposite is depicted in the above text; rather than praying for his destiny to be fulfilled quickly, Jesus prays that it be averted! He prays to God that He take **this cup away from him**, the cup symbolising destiny (Matthew 20:22). Jesus had no desire to get himself arrested, or being condemned, dying, he prays to God in anguish that all be averted. This certainly does not reflect the words and actions of the 'Son of God' who came to the world for the sole purpose of dying for the sins of mankind, but rather a prophet of God who wished to complete his mission and like any human being, not meet such a dismal fate.

As expected, many Christians have attempted all sorts of interpretations and acrobatics to explain the prayer of Jesus, often arguing that it was his *human side* that prayed while his *god side* accepted his destiny. What was his *god side* doing while the other side was praying for his death to be averted? The argument places Jesus in a schizophrenic state, which is not only illogical but insulting to him.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) writes about the prayer of Jesus:

"Jesus prayed to God all night, on his face, and in tears, and such prayer offered with such humility, and for which Jesus had ample time, could not go unaccepted; for the cry of an elect of God, addressed at a time of distress, is never turned down. How was it then, that the prayer of Jesus which he had addressed all night with a painful heart and in a state of distress was rejected? Therefore, the rejection of Jesus' own prayer would have shaken the faith of the disciples. Was it possible to place before the disciples an example destructive of their faith? If they had seen with their own eyes that the prayer of a great prophet like Jesus, addressed all night with burning passion, was not accepted, the unfortunate example would have been very trying for their faith. Therefore, the Merciful God could not but have accepted this prayer. It is certain the prayer offered at Gethsemane was accepted." (*Jesus in India*, 2016, p.33-34)

Thus later Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad later presents further arguments in his book that Jesus' prayer was indeed answered; that he was saved from dying on the cross, and

lived to a much older age, successfully completing his divine mission.

[341] The words of prayer spoken by Jesus above are only a tiny summary of what he prayed, since he prays for at least an hour and returns to find his disciples sleeping, most likely due to the late night.

[342] Whilst Peter seems to be singled out as the one being rebuked by Jesus, in this verse the *you* is plural, pointing to the other disciples as well.

[343] When Jesus returns a third time, he realises that his time is up, and that Judas with the soldiers are approaching. Jesus refers to himself as the son of man and states that he is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Whilst many may understand the **sinners** referring to the Jewish priests, it is more likely that Jesus was referring to the Gentiles, since often in the gospels, Jesus has likened Gentiles to sinners (Matthew 8:17). Even Paul expresses the Jewish view of Gentile sinners in Galatians 2:15.

[344] Judas comes leading some officers and soldiers from the Temple; he provides them with a signal, since they themselves may not have known whom to arrest. **Kissing** someone, particularly a superior was often a sign of respect given to them; it often meant kissing the hand, breast, knee or feet. In the above, it is likely that Judas kissed the hand of Jesus which seems to be a rather rare practice, since this is the first and only time we hear of the disciples kissing Jesus' hand.

[345] The account of one of the disciples drawing his sword and **cutting off the ear** of one of the Jewish soldiers is further elaborated in the other gospels. Mark simply records the event, without much explanation. As shown in John 18:10, it was Peter who did so and the action resulted in a scuffle which only ended when Jesus ordered Peter to surrender his weapon since they were greatly outnumbered.

It is interesting to note that it is only in the Gospel of John where Peter is identified as the man who defended Jesus. Why didn't the other gospels identify him? The answer is simple when it comes to the gospels of Matthew and Luke; they simply copied the Gospel of Mark who didn't name Peter. Why does Mark omit it? It might be because our author Mark didn't know; his source, i.e. the traditions he heard didn't mention Peter. They might have done so on purpose, since Peter was alive at that time and it could have got him in trouble. Afterall, he attacked the Temple police! But by the time the Gospel of John was written, Peter would have been dead for many years, so the author would have had no problem in recording his name, or he may simply have used a different source to Mark.

One particular scholar doubts the above tradition, arguing that had a disciple really attacked the Temple police, then they too would have been arrested just like Jesus. Bart Ehrman believes that the above tradition was most likely a "distorted memory", used to pave the way for Jesus' famous saying recorded in the gospel of Matthew 26:52: *for all those who take the sword will die by the sword. (Weren't Jesus' Followers Armed and Eager to Fight in the Garden of Gethsemane?*, Jun 17, 2020, <https://ehrmanblog.org/werent-jesus-followers-armed-and-eager-to-fight-in-the-garden-of-gethsemane/>) The scholar may be correct, yet at the same time, the disciple who did attack the soldier may simply have fled and escaped imprisonment.

[346] Jesus confronts the officers and accuses them of cowardice, since **daily** he taught in the **Temple** and they did not have the courage to arrest him there, but instead did so privately. It may also refer to the test the Pharisees tried to catch him out on when asked whether to pay the tax to Caesar (12:15), which in turn completely failed.

It is difficult to identify exactly which scripture Jesus was referring to; it may be that he was quoting the Book of Zechariah about striking the Shepherd and the sheep will scatter (13:7). We can only guess.

The other possibility is that the above words are words of the author who wishes to argue that the Passion narrative; Jesus being arrested, tried, condemned and ultimately killed was in accordance with scripture, which is not accurate, since no scripture mentions or prophesies the Messiah going through such an ordeal (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for details of the prophecies of the Messiah). Some Christians may argue that the Suffering Servant Songs speak of Jesus, but these have already been discussed and shown not to be the case (see under [Matthew 8:17](#)).

[347] After realising that they were outnumbered, the disciples of Jesus all fled.

[348] The identity of this **young man** has been debated by many scholars; he is unnamed most likely for the same reasons that Peter was unnamed in Mark; to protect him. The young man is obviously a devoted follower of Jesus; when the latter is arrested, the young man tries to defend him and fights just as Peter does. But in the scuffle, he also sees that it is futile and in the end flees. The statement that he ran away naked, may either be interpreted that he was literally naked or in his undergarments. A likely candidate may be James the brother of Jesus, who probably wore a large linen cloak or shirt (see under [Mark 6:3](#) for more details).

[349] After seizing Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, the officers take him to the **high priest**, who had gathered together the **elders** and **scribes** and formed a council (Sanhedrin), to interrogate Jesus.

However, there is a problem; according to Jewish Law, it was illegal to hold any trial on the eve of a festival: 'Therefore they do not judge capital cases neither on the eve of a Sabbath nor on the eve of a festival' (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:1). It was even illegal to hold capital trials during the night: 'In property cases they try the case by day and complete it by night. In capital cases they try the case by day and complete it by day (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:1). So if a Sanhedrin was formed at night, all the elders and scribes were breaking their own laws.

Is it more likely that only a few members or part of the council convened, perhaps those members most influenced by Caiaphas. This is one of the instances where the Gospel of John actually presents a more historically likely picture; as it mentions no trial, but only some questioning by Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. However, according to John's Gospel, this is all done twenty-four hours *before* the Passover meal (the Last Supper), and therefore breaks no laws (John 18).

If a trial was performed, then it would not have been an official one as depicted by our authors Mark, Matthew and Luke. But would have been a small-scaled gathering of the elders to discuss how they were to deal with Jesus. Or maybe a trial actually took place, but rather it being at night, it took place early in the morning (see next chapter).

With the above in mind, the most likely order of events was as follows: Jesus was arrested at night (all four gospels) and taken to Annas' house for initial interrogation (John). On the following morning, the official trial was set for Jesus (Mark, Matthew and Luke) where Jesus was subsequently condemned and delivered over to Pilate. If that's how it worked, then we have to conclude that the first three gospels got their facts wrong by stating that the official trial occurred at night. And that the fourth gospel John missed out a the main trial in the morning.

[350] In the Gospel of Mark, Peter seems to follow alone from a **distance**, even though earlier the readers are told in verse 50 of the same chapter that all the disciples fled. Historically, again the Gospel of John seems to be more accurate, contradicting the other gospels: John records Peter following Jesus, but does not simply walk into the courtyard of Caiaphas but comes along with an unnamed disciple (John 18:15), who lets him in. This would make perfect sense and also explains why the disciple is not named. It is very likely that the other disciple was either Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, both secret followers of Jesus and members of the Sanhedrin.

After witnessing Jesus' arrest and seeing him taken away, Peter would have run off in search of these two disciples who in turn would have known what to do, or at least would have provided more help to Jesus than Peter due to their position, and having access to the proceedings going on in the house of Caiaphas. Peter entered along with the other disciple, but was not permitted inside the actual house and so was told to wait outside with the other officers.

[351] This is unexpected as witnesses seem to have been brought in to testify against Jesus; this must have already been pre-planned by Caiaphas who must have examined the witnesses on a former occasion in order to have them at hand, everything neatly arranged, so as to ensure a prompt conviction: Time was short and the Festival was being held on the next day. But, in the above it seems that their testimonies did not match; surely Caiaphas or the other members were not examining them or questioning them, picking their stories apart, since they wished to condemn Jesus quickly. So who was bothering to examine the witnesses on Jesus' behalf? It could not have been Jesus himself, since he was silent throughout the trial. The only person or persons who were likely to do this were the supporters of Jesus, namely Nicodemus or Joseph who did exactly what Peter had in mind when they found them (see previous note).

[352] One of the charges against Jesus seems to be that he said that he would destroy the Temple which was made by **hands** and rebuild another one **without hands**. The problem with this accusation is that Jesus was never reported to have made any such statement! This may have been the reason why this accusation was thrown out. The only thing which Jesus did which comes close to the accusation was that he foretold the destruction of the Temple in Mark 13:2, but he only points out that it will be destroyed; he himself is not the destroyer, nor is there any mention of another Temple being built either.

[353] Seeing Nicodemus and/or Joseph refuting the claims of the false witnesses, Caiaphas stood up himself and questioned Jesus, provoking him to answer some of the allegations.

[354] Seeing that he was not getting anywhere with these allegations, Caiaphas asks Jesus plainly, whether he is the **Christ/Messiah**. The latter part of the question (**son of The Blessed**) is suspicious, combining the two titles as if they go hand in hand. As already explained under [Mark 1:11](#), the title *son of God* was often used in Jewish literature and itself was not blasphemous. It was never solely linked with the Messiah either. The attribution of the son of God with the Messiah seems to be a Christian invention, and thus this part of the question must have originated from Mark rather than Caiaphas.

[355] With regards to Jesus' answer, particularly the return of Jesus; this again seems to be the words of the author and not of Jesus. It is linked with the vision of Daniel 7:13 (for more details, see under [Mark 13:26](#)). As argued under that verse, it would have been unlikely for Jesus to have stated the above or to have made such a claim.

It is possible that Jesus had given some other answer which would have provoked the elders to quickly condemn him to death. It is recorded in the Acts of Pilate, also called the Gospel of Nicodemus, which is an apocryphal gospel (gospel written in someone else's name) said to have been written around the fourth century CE. However, it may contain traditions which were earlier. In this gospel, Jesus was in fact charged with breaking the Sabbath regulations and then brought over to Pilate. This may well have been the case, since none of the gospel writers were eye witnesses, nor could anyone else have known what was being discussed in the private council, except of course Nicodemus. Either way, the elders find some accusation and vote that Jesus is deserving of death.

[356] The **tearing of garments** was a sign of horror and grief in ancient Israel. It was especially serious for Caiaphas, the high priest, since the Torah forbids the high priests from rending their clothes, even to have untidy hair (Lev 21:10). With regards to the actual statement put into the mouth of Jesus, according to the Mishnah, Jesus' answer would not have been a crime and would not have fallen under the category of blasphemy (m.Sanh 7:5), since blasphemy was defined as actually pronouncing the name of God, which Jesus does not do (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p.705).

[357] After condemning him, some of the elders seem to come down on Jesus, acting like a mob, beating and slapping him. The officers of Pilate seem to join in as well, not wanting to miss out on the action.

[358] The account now returns to Peter, who was sitting outside all the while warming himself with the fire.

[359] She looks at him intently and seems to recognise him, possibly from seeing him with Jesus in the Temple while the latter taught. She refers to Jesus as a **Nazarene**; which is often the custom of people referring to others from their place of origin. Nazarene would simply be one from Nazareth.

[360] **Important Words**

The WEB adds three further words at the end of the verse: *and your speech shows it*. These words seem to be present in the Received Text from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, they are absent from more modern Bible editions such as the RSV. Hence I have omitted them.

[361] Peter, nicknamed the Rock, has often been vilified for the above; his denying Jesus three times to save his own skin. He is not only portrayed as a coward, but a liar as well, since earlier he even promises Jesus that even unto death he will not deny him (Mark 14:31). But when the account is viewed historically, it can be seen that Peter acted in the opposite manner, with his focus being on saving Jesus' life. It should be recalled that Peter came in with another unnamed disciple (John 18:15); most likely Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. When accused of being a disciple of Jesus, Peter found himself in a difficult position; if he had admitted he was a disciple of Jesus, then Joseph or Nicodemus, who had accompanied him and ensured he gained access to the yard, would have been exposed and his attempts to have Jesus acquitted would have come to nothing. He therefore was placed in a dilemma; choosing to lie, in the hope that Joseph or Nicodemus would be able to save Jesus, seemed to be the best option.

It seems that the story about the cock crowing and the prediction of Peter's denial are the inventions of the early Church, perhaps to explain away what they thought to be cowardice, yet this was not the case at all as explained above. Remember, that Peter's original name was Simon and that he was named Peter by Jesus himself, meaning *The Rock, upon whom Jesus was to build his church* (Matthew 16:18). Are we really to believe Jesus chose a coward and a liar to build his Church upon?

[362] The account continues following the condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrin the night before. It is uncertain why the **chief priests, elders, scribes** and the **whole Sanhedrin** would hold another **consultation** early in the morning again, when they had already held a trial and condemned Jesus the night before. It could be that they came together to decide what charge to accuse Jesus of before Pilate, the Roman governor, since he would not have punished Jesus for breaking the Jewish Law of blasphemy. As will be shown, Jesus is accused of insurrection before Pilate instead of blasphemy. If this be the case, then it is likely that it was just the chief priests who gathered in the morning, since it was they who took Jesus to Pilate and made the allegations against Jesus.

On the other hand, the other possible interpretation is that the above was the proper council that was held. As already mentioned under Mark 14:53, there are numerous problems with having a council held the night before; the legibility and the fact that John omits it completely. It may be that an initial interrogation was held the night before and the proper and official one in the morning as mentioned above. However, if this interpretation is to hold, then it would imply that the Sanhedrin held the night before, recorded by both Mark and Matthew did not happen and both authors got their facts muddled up.

[363] **Pontius Pilate** was governor of Judea, and was ruler from 26 CE to 36 CE, thus ruling during the ministry of Jesus. There exist two opposing views on the character of Pilate; one drawn from first century Jewish sources and the other from the gospels.

The Pilate portrayed in the gospels and by the Christian Church is a mild mannered, innocent and pious governor who tries his best to have Jesus released from captivity, and only agrees with the crucifixion after being forced by the Jewish priests and mob. On the other hand, he is portrayed as a harsh and cruel leader in Jewish sources, predominantly reported in Josephus and Philo. Josephus discusses his dismissal after he had a group of Samaritans murdered: “Vitellius relieved Pilate of his office and ordered him to appear before the emperor in Rome on account of his misdeeds” (Josephus, Ant 18:55-89). Philo, a contemporary of Pilate, quotes a letter of the Jewish King Agrippa 1 (37-41 CE) to the emperor, where Pilate is described to be a stubborn and vindictive man, said to be inflexible and was guilty of insults, robberies, outrages and wanton injuries; he was also responsible for numerous executions without trials and other acts of cruelty (Philo, *Legatio* 299-305).

It is not easy to reconcile the above two portrayals, but most likely due to the favourable attitude of Pilate towards Jesus against the Jews, he is likely to have been seen as a pious man to the Christians. Why he acted favourably to Jesus will be explained below.

[364] In verse 1 the chief priests deliver Jesus over to the governor and without any introduction or accusation, the text of Mark immediately moves on to the questioning of Jesus by Pilate. The latter seems to be aware of the charge and questions Jesus as to whether he claims to be the Messiah of Israel. The answer of Jesus: **So you say**, is ambiguous and is neither a denial nor an acceptance. Some interpreters have stated that Jesus does so intentionally, since he did claim to be the Messiah and King of Israel, but not in the form or way Pilate understood it. However, it is likely to be an affirmation, since Jesus says the same in Matthew 26: 25 and 64, implying an affirmation.

[365] The author Mark states that it was the custom of Pilate or any other governor to release a prisoner of the Jews to them during the Passover feast. We aren't so sure if this is true, and was most likely the invention of the author, or some other Christian, since there's no evidence outside the gospels of Pilate or any other governor of the Jews having done so during the Passover feast (Adela Yarbro Collins, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of Mark*, 2007, p714-5).

Some scholars state that the above story is likely to have been modelled after the release of prisoners according to certain customs of the Romans (Ibid), mainly for personal gain; for example, Josephus writes about the later governor of Jerusalem Albinus (62-64 CE): he writes that before the latter was moving to another post, he thought he'd make a name for himself by clearing the prisons in Jerusalem. All prisoners who were guilty of crimes deserving death were quickly executed and those who were guilty of lesser crimes were released. Subsequently Josephus complains that the land was then overrun by brigands! (*Antiquities* 20.9.3).

[366] Mark then introduces a prisoner; **Barabbas**, the name meaning *son of Abba*. Jesus referred to God as *Abba* in the Gethsemane garden, thus the readers may be inclined to think that the two, Jesus and Barabbas, are rivals in some way, opposites perhaps. Barabbas, a rebel who may have committed murder with his fellow insurgents is now presented by Pilate who is subsequently released. This lends further support to the unlikelihood of the story to have happened; for a Roman governor to potentially release a rebel, possibly the most dangerous type of prisoner for Rome, is absurd and would never have happened.

One famous scholar vehemently argues against the historical likelihood of the above event:

“Is Pilate the sort of person who would kindly accede to the requests of his Jewish subjects in light of their religious sensitivities? In fact he was just the opposite kind of person. Not only do we have no record of him releasing prisoners to them once a year, or ever, but knowing what we know about him, it seems completely implausible. I should point out that we don't have any evidence of any Roman governor, anywhere, in any of the provinces, having any such policy.

And thinking about the alleged facts of the case for a second, how could there be such a policy? Barabbas in this account is not just a murderer, he is an insurrectionist. If he was involved with an insurrection, that means he engaged in an armed attempt to overthrow Roman rule. If he murdered during the

insurrection, he almost certainly would have murdered a Roman soldier or someone who collaborated with the Romans. Are we supposed to believe that the ruthless, iron-fisted Pilate would release a dangerous enemy of the state because the Jewish crowd would have liked him to do so? What did Romans do with insurrectionists? Did they set them free so they could engage in more armed guerrilla warfare? Would any ruling authority do this? Of course not. Would the Romans? Actually we know what they did with insurrectionists. They crucified them.” (Bart Ehrman, *Did the Gospel Writers Invent Barabbas? Readers’ Mailbag*, June 2020, <https://ehrmanblog.org/did-the-gospel-writers-invent-barabbas-readers-mailbag/>)

[367] Thus far in the narrative it would have been impossible for Pilate to know that the chief priests delivered Jesus up due to jealousy, simply because Jesus has made no reply or answered any of the allegations raised against him. In fact according to Mark, Pilate would have no reason or option but to condemn Jesus, since the latter was silent, which presumably would imply that he is guilty of the charges.

[368] **Crucifixion** was a common execution method used by many Ancient civilisations, including the Egyptians, Persians and Greeks. It entailed placing the victim on a cross, with the more common method involving the victim’s wrists being tied to the upper piece of wood, or worse (as in Jesus’ case) driving blunt nails through the person’s wrists and into the wood. Nails were further driven through the victim’s feet into a plank. The victim was then hanged, with death taking many hours and in most cases days. The purpose was to prolong the suffering. The victim wouldn’t die of suffocation as many believe, but of shock, dehydration, exhaustion or wild animal attacks.

The Romans often crucified prisoners, and it was one of the favourite execution methods for rebels and revolutionaries, since it served as a dire warning to others. The famous account of Spartacus and his gladiators revolting against the Romans ends with the rebels being crucified along the road from Naples to Rome. In essence, crucifixion was possibly the most painful method of execution by the Romans, and for the crowds crying out such a punishment for Jesus would show to the reader their utter disregard for innocent life and their blood thirsty nature.

[369] After Jesus is condemned, he is then **flogged** and **mocked** by the soldiers. According to Mark, the reason for the flogging seems to be part of the crucifixion process, but in John it seems to be the plan of Pilate to save Jesus. Mark’s version of the account seems more likely to be historically true (see under [John 19:5](#) for more details).

After the flogging, the soldiers continue to mock Jesus and dress him up with **purple** garments, most likely the ones he was wearing after Herod had him dressed up (Luke 23:11). They continue doing so until it is time to have him taken out to the cross. This seems to have been the standard practice of the Romans in treating condemned criminals.

[370] Whilst they were taking Jesus out to Golgotha, where he was to be crucified, the soldiers seem to randomly choose a passer-by and force him to help Jesus in carrying the **cross**, as he was too weak from his ordeal beginning with the Jewish crowds and his flogging by the Roman soldiers. Some scholars have even suggested that Jesus refused to carry the cross in protest against the injustice of his condemnation.

[371] It is debated amongst scholars as to who exactly was giving the wine and for what purpose. As regards who, some scholars believe that the Roman soldiers offered him wine as a form of torture, particularly by adding a lot of myrrh so as to make it bitter and undrinkable. Others argue that it was a continuation of their mockery, as if offering wine to a King. But myrrh is expensive and it would have been unlikely that soldiers would have been able to afford it.

Many other scholars have come to the conclusion that it was in fact Jewish women who tried to give it to him. Indeed it was a Jewish custom to do so; in the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs, it is commanded that the Jews “Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more (31:6-7). In the Talmud it is recorded that noble women in Jerusalem used to donate and bring wine for the victims of punishments (m. Sanh.

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6:1). Thus it's likely that wine mixed with myrrh was brought by some women to give to Jesus in order to dull the pain, or more likely as will be explained under John 19:30, the wine was probably a sedative brought by some of the female followers of Jesus (Mark 15:41).

Jesus however, refused to take the drink, most likely knowing the custom that it was to dull the pain of the victim by dulling their senses, but he would have wanted to stay in the right state of mind, praying to God in the hope and expectation that He would save him from the accursed death.

[372] The **third hour** above is around 9am.

[373]

The Romans would often place placards on victims or around them to indicate what sort of crime they had committed. In the case of Jesus, the inscription seems sarcastic.

[374] These two may have been robbers, bandits, rebels etc. Possibly Zealots.

[375] **Textual Variant**

This verse is missing in many ancient manuscripts such as Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Bezae. It may have initially been written in the margins by certain Christian scribes as a commentary to the above, but then made its way into the text, or scribes took it from Luke 22:37 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.196). Either way, it is a forgery.

[376] As time goes on, people pass by and **wag their heads** at the sight of Jesus, obviously with disgust. The aim of the chief priests seems to have been accomplished; for all who witness the event will be convinced that Jesus was not the Messiah and will in turn return home after the Passover and inform their villages and towns of the news. To encourage the belief that he was not the Messiah, the chief priests themselves join in the taunting and demand that Jesus come down alive from the cross, and if he were able to, they would believe him to be the Messiah.

Interestingly, this is exactly what Jesus does, it is recorded in the Gospel of Hebrews:

'Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth unto the servant of the priest, went unto James and appeared to him (for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep)', and again after a little, 'Bring ye, saith the Lord, a table and bread', and immediately it is added, 'He took bread and blessed and brake and gave it unto James the Just and said unto him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep'. (Translated by M.R. James, made available on www.earlychristianwritings.com)

This gospel is often interpreted as being a lost version of the Gospel of Matthew. It is recorded by numerous Church fathers and the above is recorded in the works of St Jerome, *Of Illustrious Men*, 2. This account begins with Jesus leaving the tomb and then shows James the brother of Jesus playing a pivotal role in the rescue mission of Jesus. He swears not to eat until he sees Jesus alive again. When Jesus hears of this, he immediately goes and sees his brother.

The interesting point is the first sentence: After Jesus leaves the tomb, he turns to one of the servants of the priests and gives him the linen cloth he was wrapped in. This was a sign to the High Priest, Caiaphas, to indicate that his plan has failed; Jesus has survived the crucifixion and God has proved him to be the true Messiah. Since Caiaphas challenged Jesus earlier that he should come down from the cross, the Jews would in turn believe him to be the Messiah, and this is exactly what happened. The cloth handed over by the servant may well have been the very famous Turin Shroud.

[377] The **sixth hour** would be around noon, when the sun was at its highest point. At that time, Mark records that it became **dark over the land** until the **ninth hour** (around 3pm), thus making the darkness last for about three hours. There has been a lot of debate over what caused this darkness. Some have argued that this was an eclipse of the sun, but a total eclipse of the sun only lasts for a matter of minutes, usually around seven or eight at most; whereas Mark is talking about darkness lasting for hours.

However, we can't rule out an eclipse so quickly, whilst a total eclipse of the sun only lasts for a few minutes, eclipses have often been greatly exaggerated by observers in the past. For example the eclipse which was seen in Reichersberg in 1241 was recorded to have lasted for several hours whilst modern estimates indicate it was only for three and a half minutes. It's therefore possible that Mark or his source greatly exaggerated the duration of the eclipse.

Another natural possibility would be that a dark cloud covered the sun for many hours. Or as the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) writes: "On the one hand was this welcome circumstance which was born of earthly causes, and, on the other, divine scheme intervened. When the sixth hour had struck, a severe dust storm began to blow which enveloped the world in darkness and persisted for at least three hours" (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Jesus in India*, 2016, p.25).

The Gospel of Peter mentions that the soldiers became somewhat worried that the darkness was the equivalent of sunset, the sun having disappeared, and they were anxious that they had contravened their orders to allow the bodies to remain after that time (Chapter 5). But later in the same gospel it is recorded that after Jesus was taken down from the cross (in the darkness), his nails removed, the sun shone once more as it was only three in the afternoon (Chapter 21-22).

[378] Textual Variant

While most early manuscripts read as above, there is one Greek one which reads: **My God, my God, why have you mocked me?** (Codex Bezae). Some scholars such as the renowned Adolph von Harnack has argued that the variant reading (*mocked*) was the original and that a later Christian scribe changed it to **forsaken**. However, this is a minority view. One scholar has argued that the original was always **forsaken**, and that it was changed by the scribe of the Codex Bezae because of the Gnostics.

The Gnostics were a Christian sect who believed that Jesus was in fact two beings; one human and one divine. They believed that Jesus was born a normal human being and that later in life, he was specially chosen by a divine being, which came from heaven, the Christ and dwelt in Jesus. It was at the time of the cross when the divine being *left* or *forsook* Jesus. This verse was utilised by the Gnostics to argue their points. Therefore some Christian scribes thought to change the text of Mark to stop the Gnostics from using it (Bart Ehrman, *An Intentional Change in Mark 15:34*, Aug 2, 2015, <https://ehrmanblog.org/an-intentional-change-in-mark-1534/>).

Commentary

Praying all night and being confident that God would answer his prayers, Jesus naturally felt a little perplexed that things weren't going according to plan or as he expected. He cried out: **'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?'**. Readers can feel the pain and suffering Jesus went through, the desperation, yet with complete reliance on God at the same time.

This though, is not the typical idealised way many Ancient heroes died in the past; Socrates is reported to have said to his friend: "Crito, we owe a rooster to Asclepius. Please, don't forget to pay the debt." Asclepius was the Greek god for curing illness, thus many have interpreted Socrates' last words to indicate that death was his cure (Plato, *Phaedo* 117-118). The death of Eleazar is reported in similar terms; whilst being tortured he said that this soul was glad to suffer these things due to his fear of God (2 Maccabees 6:30). Even later Christian leaders are spoken of as dying with honour and dignity; Polycarp was burned at the stake but remained completely calm (Martyrdom of Polycarp). Blandina is reported to have suffered immensely but she, too, remained calm and in peace (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 5.1.19).

Yet, when it comes to the supposed death of Jesus, which according to Christians was his *sole* purpose of coming into the world, he is grieved and greatly disturbed in

Gethsemane, and now he cries out desperately to God. Thus it is clear that he didn't want to die and was not expecting it; he was immensely concerned not for his own life, but for the people he was sent to, and was worried about his inability to fulfil his mission to bring the Jewish tribes back to the true teachings of the Torah.

Uncomfortable with this cry of despair, many Christians have argued that he was quoting scripture; Psalms 22:1 in particular. According to them, Jesus was both fully God and fully human. God cannot be anywhere near sin, and since Jesus was atoning for the sins of humanity, i.e. taking on their sins, the 'God side' of Jesus had to leave, leaving the 'human side' to lament over the separation. This is why Jesus or the 'human side' cried out: 'Why have You forsaken me?' However, there are two main problems with this interpretation; the first is why did the supposed 'human side' of Jesus cry out the above? Did it not know about its divine plan to die on the cross? Was the 'human side' kept out of the loop? When Jesus' ultimate aim and purpose (according to the Christian interpreters) of coming to the earth began to unfold, why does the 'human side' cry out the above as if it is completely ignorant of what is happening?

The second problem revolves around the words Jesus cries out above; which are in Jesus' mother tongue: *Aramaic*. However, the text which our Christian friends say he was quoting is in Hebrew, which is "'Eli 'Eli lamah 'azabtan!'", whilst Jesus cries out "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach-than!*" Why would Jesus quote a Hebrew text in translation? Jesus knew both Aramaic and Hebrew, like most of the Jews living in Jerusalem. The famous scholar Geza Vermes makes this strong argument in his book *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*, 2003, p.194. The Jews in those days would have known many of the Psalms by heart, and Jesus must have known them too, so why would he quote it in a different tongue? If an Islamic scholar were addressing some students in English, and he along with the students knew *both* English and Arabic, it would be natural for him to quote the Holy Quran in its original language; Arabic. He wouldn't go through the trouble of translating it. Likewise, Jesus would have, had he been *quoting* the Psalms.

The answer is, that it was a cry of desperation, seeing that things were not going the way he had expected; in that he knew God would heed the call and prayer of His Prophet and Messiah, yet he could feel his strength wavering and perhaps saw no other opportunity of surviving the ordeal, so he cried out to God, 'Why have You forsaken me?'

[379] It is uncertain who exactly Mark is referring to when stating that those standing by heard it and said that he was **calling Elijah**. It would not have been the Roman soldiers since they were Gentiles and wouldn't have a clue who Elijah was. It may well have been some of the chief priests, who decided to stick around and when hearing Jesus cry, unable to exactly make out what he was saying, thought and uttered rather mockingly that he was calling out to the miracle-working Prophet Elijah to come from heaven and save him.

[380] It's unlikely that one of the chief priests carried out the above, but he may well have sent one of his slaves, or perhaps a Jew was standing by watching the spectacle. He goes up to Jesus and offers him a drink, which Jesus seems to accept. Whilst giving him the drink, the man departs saying **let's see if Elijah comes to take him down**. The man does not seem to utter the words mockingly, but rather out of curiosity; it's likely that he wished to see if Elijah would actually come and save Jesus, thus he offers Jesus a drink to prolong his life long enough to see if the miracle would occur.

[381] After receiving the drink, Jesus **cries out** and breathes his last. It may be worth noting that the last thing that occurs when Jesus supposedly breathes his last is the drinking of the wine. What was in this drink? The historical Jesus was a healer, and it is likely that the followers of Jesus were also familiar with medicines. Thus their plan begins to materialise; the only way to save Jesus from dying on the cross was to place him into a deep swoon, and to *look* dead. With prayers and God's help, the Romans would think Jesus to be dead and readily hand him over to his disciples and family, at which point they would immediately tend to his wounds and revive him. The first part of the plan seems to work, Jesus takes the drink and falls unconscious. The eyewitness who saw Jesus **breathe his last** saw him fall unconscious and mistook him for dead.

[382] It is not explained how the **Temple veil/curtain** was torn in Mark, but Matthew elaborates further explaining that an earthquake occurred which may have caused the curtain to tear (Matthew 27:51). The tearing of the Temple curtain most likely meant the displeasure of God and the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy of the destruction of the Temple by Jesus (see **Mark 13:1-2**). The Temple curtain covered the *Holy of Holies*, which was the inner sanctuary of the Temple, where God supposedly dwelt. Some Christians argue that the tearing of the curtain meant that God is now 'available' to all people, since the curtain hid His presence.

Did the Temple curtain really tear as the above text indicates? There is no way to tell, the earthquake mentioned in Matthew's Gospel may have caused some damage to the Temple, which may have resulted in damage to the curtain.

[383] Relying on just the text of Mark, it is rather difficult to interpret or know *why* the **centurion** was so impressed with the supposed death of Jesus. In Mark there was no earthquake, Jesus simply fell unconscious. Some Christians have argued that the centurion witnessed the Temple curtain tearing and that may have astonished him. However, the centurion would not have been able to see the Temple curtain from Golgotha, which was west of Jerusalem as the Temple curtain was facing east.

It is only with the aid of the other gospels, and in particular Matthew's, that the occurrence of an earthquake which may have brought fear and awe to the soldiers is mentioned. If the centurion did proclaim the above, it would have been in the sense that he, a pagan would have understood the phrase, for even the emperor of Rome was considered a god by pagans.

It may be worth mentioning that Church tradition speaks of this centurion, naming him *Longinus*, who later became a Christian. This has led some to believe that the centurion was perhaps a sympathiser or even a follower of Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. And that he, too, may have played a part in the rescue of Jesus, however, there is little or no evidence to support this.

[384] **Mary** was a native of the town of Magdala by the Sea of Galilee and a very close companion of Jesus. Luke 8:3 describes her as one of the women who looked after Jesus and his disciples, which implies that she was a relatively wealthy woman, who devoted her life and person to Jesus, particularly after Jesus healed her of her evil spirits as Luke states. She plays a major role in the resurrection narratives: visiting the tomb in the Synoptic (first three) gospels and being the first to witness Jesus' resurrection in John's Gospel.

There is a lot of speculation regarding the relationship Jesus had with Mary; numerous texts mention that he loved her very much; the Gospel of Mary records how Peter is rebuked by Levi regarding Mary, saying 'Surely the Saviour knows her well. This is why he loved her more than us.' The Gospel of Philip refers to Mary as Jesus' lover (Ch. 32) and consort (Ch. 55) whom Jesus would often kiss and loved very much. Mary may well have been the wife of Jesus, but this is all uncertain and speculation.

[385] Three women are spoken of among the followers of Jesus who stood by at a distance, although there may have been more. Mark mentions three of them: **Mary Magdalene**; another **Mary**, the **mother of James** the Less and Joses, and Salome, whom very little is known about. All three names were very common and as such it is difficult to narrow down who exactly they are, with the exception of Mary Magdalene.

[386] **Joseph of Arimathea** was a secret follower of Jesus. Little is known about him; he was a member of the Sanhedrin and was wealthy. It is recorded in the Gospel of Peter that Joseph was a close friend of Pilate, and therefore was able to ask for Jesus' body. Pilate complied with Joseph's request as a favour. Initially, this may seem rather surprising, since Joseph was not related to Jesus, and the body of victims were often given over to the family members for burial. Therefore for Joseph to come along and ask for the body points to something out of the ordinary, and as explained under John's version (John 19:38-42), it seems that Joseph along with Nicodemus was in on the plan to

rescue Jesus.

[387] The reason Pilate **marvelled** was because it normally took days for a man to die on the cross. This was the very purpose of crucifixion; to prolong the suffering. Pilate, having ordered many crucifixions before knew very well how long a typical crucifixion took, and was naturally surprised and maybe even suspicious that Jesus was already dead. He therefore had the centurion in charge confirm that he was in fact dead and then gave him over to Joseph.

[388] After taking Jesus, the first thing to do was to tend to his wounds; this is where Joseph came in handy. Since he was a friend of Pilate, he was able to get Jesus down from the cross earlier than normal, and immediately wrapped Jesus's body tightly in healing herbs (John 19:35-42) to stop the bleeding and placed him in a newly cut tomb, which was clean and large enough for other followers to be there to tend to his wounds without outside interference.

[389] After witnessing the burial in the previous chapter, the women come after the **Sabbath**, bringing with them **spices** to **anoint** Jesus. The traditional Christian interpretation is that their intention was to go to the tomb and cleanse the body of Jesus and rewrap him in perhaps new sheets and then give him a proper burial.

However, there is a serious problem with that: According to Mark (15:46), Joseph took the body of Jesus and wrapped him in linen cloths. But he would not have done so if he had not already cleaned the body; otherwise the sweat and blood of the body would have stuck to the cloth. Then leaving the body for a day and a half in such a state would have made it almost impossible to access it to clean; since it would have required peeling off the sheets, which would probably have peeled off parts of the skin as well. Joseph was no doubt smart enough not to wrap a body in linen cloths without first cleaning it. However, neither Mark nor the other gospels mention anyone washing the body of Jesus before wrapping it, which would have been the standard procedure for shrouding a dead body.

The answer to solve this problem lies in John's Gospel (John 19:38); Jesus' body was anointed with medical spices and then wrapped in linen cloths. Thus the most likely explanation for the women's visit was to bring further supplies to the disciples who were tending to Jesus' wounds. There can be no other reason for them to visit and **bring spices**. It seems that some of the disciples of Jesus, namely Joseph and Nicodemus had kept the plans to save Jesus secret, to the point of not even informing many of the twelve of their plans. This may be due to the Jewish priests keeping a close eye on the activities of the main disciples, and having them visiting the bazaars for spices and going to the tomb would have been suspicious. Furthermore, one of the disciples had already betrayed Jesus, so Joseph and Nicodemus weren't sure who to exactly trust. The women however, would have been left alone. Joseph and Nicodemus seemed to have informed the women who followed the day before and instructed them to bring supplies when the Sabbath was over.

[390] This is Sunday; according to the Jewish calendar it was the first day of the week. The women obeyed the Sabbath Laws and did not go to the tomb.

[391] Whilst on their way to the tomb, the women display their lack of planning skills and begin to question each other about rolling the **very large** stone away from the entrance and who would do it for them. The statement that it was very large is likely to be an exaggeration since earlier in 15:46 Joseph is said to have rolled the stone over the entrance. It may have been a large-ish stone, which the women would have struggled with, but not so large as often portrayed by some Christians who argue that only an angel would have been strong enough to move it.

[392] When the women enter the tomb, they see a **young man dressed in white** and are taken aback. The author most likely wished to express the idea that the young man was an angel; that Jesus had resurrected from the dead and perhaps left an angel to inform the women of the news. But historically it is more likely that he was simply a young follower of Jesus or a slave/servant of Joseph who had aided in the recovery of Jesus. The women were expecting Joseph to be with Jesus in the tomb, and were probably

amazed that Jesus had already been taken out.

[393] Important Words

ἡγέρθη (*agerthay*) – Verb, aorist passive indicative, 3rd person singular of ἐγείρω (*egiro*), which means: *waking up; awaken; raise up; helping someone to stand up; restore to health*; it also means *to resurrect* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). It is the same verb uttered by Jesus to the sleeping girl in Jairus' house (see Mark 5:41).

[394] The young man reassures the women that Jesus is alright; he probably explained to them how the recovery process went, showing them where he was laid and how Joseph tended his wounds, and how he was taken out once he had recovered enough to walk a bit with the aid of some support.

[395] The young man proceeds to pass on the message of Jesus to the women, who should go and deliver it to the rest of the disciples; that Jesus is now conscious and has gone over to Galilee, outside of Roman jurisdiction where he was a condemned criminal. They should all gather and meet him there as soon as possible.

[396] This now marks the end of the Gospel of Mark; the women were **trembling** and **astonished**, but as indicated by the other gospels they were trembling out of excitement! For Jesus was on the road to recovery and was on the way to continue his mission. It is not clear why Mark ends with them not obeying the instruction of the young man; perhaps they forgot or it is more likely, that our author Mark did not have any further information than the above and thus ends his gospel at this point.

As can be seen, the above short resurrection account can be viewed in a completely different way to the traditional Christian interpretation and can for many, make far more sense historically. The other gospels contain more information, most likely due to them having access to more material.

I advise the reader to check and compare the other resurrection accounts of the gospels, reading attentively, you will notice a large number of inconsistencies:

- With regards to the number of women coming to the tomb: Mark speaks of three (16:1); Matthew has just two (28:1); Luke has two Marys, Joanna and the other women (24:10); whilst John has only Mary (20:1).
- The appearances of the angels to the women fails no better: Mark has *one* angel/young man *in* the tomb (16:5); Matthew has *one* angel *outside* the tomb (28:5); Luke has *two* angels *in* the tomb (24:4); and John has *two* angels *in* the tomb (20:12).
- Was there an earthquake as Matthew tells us or no earthquake? Why didn't the other gospels mention that?
- What about the Roman soldiers as mentioned by Matthew? Why didn't Mark, Luke or John mention them?
- Did Jesus meet and have a conversation with Mary as John's Gospel tells us? Again, why didn't Mark, Matthew or Luke know this?

Traditional Christians have attempted to resolve the problems by stating that *all* the above occurred, thus in effect doubling the size of the narratives and adding further confusion about the authentic series of events. Furthermore, to merge all the accounts would result in a fifth gospel, unlike any of the four.

This also marks the end of the Gospel of Mark. The oldest complete New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus ends the gospel here; the scribe of the Codex even scribbled a line under this verse and signed the end, stating: 'The Gospel according to Mark'. The remaining text is therefore spurious and acknowledged as a forgery. See below for more details.

[397] Textual Variant

There are in fact a number of endings to the Gospel of Mark. The shorter ending of Mark (ending at verse 8) is attested in the two oldest complete New Testaments: Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. The longer ending of Mark (from verse 9 onwards) is not only absent from these two manuscripts, but is also absent from the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript and about a hundred Armenian ones (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of The Greek New Testament*, 2005). Some early Church fathers like Origen and Clement of Alexandria also show no knowledge of these verses, but later historians like Jerome and Eusebius are aware of them although they explain that most copies of the Bible they know of do not contain them. Yet, they have made their way into the Codex Bezae, Alexandrinus and Received Text, and thus are present in the King James Version.

It is generally held that the verses were added to the end of Mark to give it a proper ending, similar to the other gospels. Whatever the reason, these verses were not written by Mark and were added much later in the fifth century. Bart Ehrman, the famous Biblical Textual Critic argues in his book *Misquoting Jesus*, that the writing style of the verses is different from the rest of the gospel, and not only that but the fact that Mary Magdalene is introduced a second time in verse 9 shows that it was a later addition to the original text. He further states that scribes most likely thought the ending was too abrupt. Did the women not tell anyone? How did the disciples learn of the resurrection then? Jesus never proves it and simply disappears! How could that be an ending to a gospel? To solve the problems the verses were added (p.67).

[398] As mentioned above, the following narrative is not historical and was a later insertion by a scribe. However, it may be worthwhile to briefly touch upon each verse; it'll be seen that the scribe who inserted the text simply copied the other gospels. In the above, the scribe continues from the previous section and shows that when Jesus rose, he first appeared to **Mary**; thus following the account of John 20:1-18 in the order of Jesus' appearance.

[399] Mary goes and announces the news to the other disciples, but the latter do not believe her. The scribe is now utilising the Gospel of Luke, where the disciples are recorded as discarding the reports of the women in 24:11.

[400] The scribe then summarises the meeting of Jesus with the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13).

[401] Likewise, now Jesus meets the disciples and rebukes them for their disbelief (Luke 24:28).

[402] Next the scribe turns to the *final commission* as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commands the disciples to go and preach to the entire **world**.

[403] The scribe is now utilising the text of John again, this time 3:18, but modifying the tenses of the verbs from the past to the future.

[404] The scribe now attributes signs or miracles to the followers of Jesus. The first sign or power given to the disciples is that they will be able to **cast out demons**; this is not a new power given, but is already attested in Mark 6:7. The next sign of speaking in **tongues** is a summary of Acts 2:11 where after the Holy Spirit descends on each of the disciples, they begin to speak in tongues, in different languages.

[405] It is difficult to determine which passage if any in the New Testament supports the third power; that of picking up **snakes**. It may derive from Luke 10:19 where Jesus gives the disciples power to tread on snakes, or from Acts 28:1-10 where Paul is spoken of as surviving the deadly bite of a snake.

The fourth sign of drinking poison without harm does not derive from any New Testament source, but rather may point to a sign of true disciples, which they in turn may show

people their extraordinary power. Or it may form some sort of promise of protection against any assassination attempts to murder one of them through poisoning their food.

The final sign of healing the sick with the laying on of hands originates from Mark 6:13. It's rather baffling why the scribe recorded these magnificent feats of not just the disciples of Jesus, but rather of all those who believe in Jesus. Thus these signs should actually accompany those who believe in Jesus today; however, no believer these days would ever risk trying to prove their faith with the above signs.

[406] Finally, after speaking to all his disciples, Jesus takes his leave and ascends to heaven, to sit at the right hand of God.

[407] The Gospel of Matthew begins in a different manner to the other gospels; the author probably had in mind the Old Testament book of 1 Chronicles, which also opens with the **genealogies** of the prophets and then proceeds with the history. The author desired to show that Jesus was a direct descendant of Prophet's **David** and **Abraham**.

[408] For a detailed discussion on the meaning of **Jesus and Christ**, see under Mark 1:1.

[409] Matthew's genealogy is divided into three equal parts as explained in the final verse; however, the last part only contains thirteen names. Matthew may have recorded fourteen for rhetorical purposes, but by doing so, he was forced to leave out numerous generations in his genealogy, e.g. in verse 8 above Matthew states that **Joram became the father of Uzziah**, however, cross-checking this against the Old Testament, according to the book of Chronicles Joram was not the father of Uzziah but his great-great-grandfather. Therefore, this fourteen generations pattern forced our author Matthew to record an incomplete genealogy. Whoever or whatever inspired Matthew to write the above; misled him.

What is more striking is the fact that there exists four women in the genealogy: **Tamar** (verse 3); **Rahab** (verse 5); **Ruth** (verse 5); and the wife of Uriah; **Bathsheba** (verse 6). Questions have been raised about the moral conduct of the four women: **Rahab** was a prostitute; **Tamar** acted as a prostitute with her father-in-law; **Bathsheba** committed adultery with David; and **Ruth** slept at the feet of Boaz and when he awoke she convinced him to marry her. Regarding the third woman, Bathsheba, her relationship with David is only spoken of in the Bible; the allegation is that prophet David not only committed adultery with her, but also afterwards had her husband murdered. To believe in a prophet of God committing such heinous acts is not only hard to absorb but insulting to God Himself who supposedly chose such an immoral person to deliver his message. The Holy Quran speaks highly of prophet David and omits such horrible crimes, thus clearing his name of such ridiculous allegations:

“Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the man of might; surely he was always turning to God.” (38: 18)

It is possible that Matthew witnessed the allegations against Mary that she had (God forbid) committed adultery; therefore, he may have intended to bring to light other women in the past who may have had similar allegations raised against them. Whether they were cleared or not is not Matthew's concern.

The Holy Quran contradicts the above, in that the family of prophet Abraham and Imran, who was the ancestor of Mary are spoken of as being chosen by God and elevated to be “above all peoples of the time.” (3:34) Therefore, we reject the above absurd allegations that Mary's (or Joseph's) ancestry was tainted with such sinners.

Finally, it should also be noted that Jesus is not the physical and literal descendant of David, since the genealogy above links Joseph to David and not Mary, thus Jesus is related to David through marriage and *not* blood, directly contradicting Paul where he tells the Roman Church that Jesus was a *descendant from David according to the flesh*. (Rom 1:3).

[410] Matthew then turns to the **birth of Jesus** after writing his genealogy. **Mary** is first introduced as engaged to **Joseph** and before having any sexual relations with him, she was discovered to be pregnant. How Mary came to conceive Jesus without the agency of a husband has caused two opposing responses from people; some curse her for having illicit relationships (many Jews), while to others (mostly Christians), this is proof that Jesus was a divine being. The middle of the two is more likely to be true, that this event was a miracle of God, however, not a supernatural one which fell outside the laws of nature, but an incredibly rare occurrence where a female gave birth to a child without the agency of a male.

Parthenogenesis (in Greek meaning *virgin birth*) is the production of offspring by a female without any genetic contribution from a male. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association spoke in length about this, he states:

“Parthenogenesis is the asexual development of a female ovum into an individual, without the aid of a male agent. It is observed among many lower forms of life such as aphids and also fish. There is also evidence that parthenogenesis can be a successful strategy among lizards living under low and unpredictable rainfall conditions. In laboratory conditions, mice and rabbit embryos have been developed parthenogenetically to a stage equivalent to halfway through pregnancy, but have then been aborted. In a recent study, scientists found that human embryos could be occasionally activated by parthenogenesis using calcium ionophore as a catalyst. Such research raises the prospect that some early human pregnancy losses may have involved the parthenogenetic activation of the embryo...The possibility of virgin birth has been shown to be scientifically feasible. A report in the Nature Genetics of Oct. 1995 discusses the remarkable case of a three year old boy whose body is derived in part from an unfertilised egg. The researchers examined DNA sequences all along the X chromosomes in the boy's skin and blood and discovered that the X chromosomes in all his cells were identical to each other and derived entirely from his mother. Similarly, both members of each of the 22 other chromosome 7 pairs in his blood were identical and derived entirely from his mother.” (*Christianity, a Journey from Facts to Fiction*, 1994, p.6-7)

Another possible explanation may be *teratoma*, a kind of germ cell tumour which may contain several types of tissue: Connective tissue; hair; bones; teeth; adipose tissue and neural tissue etc. This tumour can form within a woman and possibly create sperm cells as well.

Finally, *hermaphroditism*, which is when organs of both sexes are present within a single female and the chromosomes show both male and female characters aligned side by side. For more details see *The virgin birth: Scientific plausibility* by Dr Jalil Ahmad Bhatti (<https://www.alhakam.org/the-virgin-birth-scientific-plausibility/>).

These are just a few possible scientific theories explaining virgin births, and medical science may be at a stage where doctors or scientists may not fully be able to explain the concept. As Mary got pregnant at a young age, before she was officially married, it is possible that she had some sort of condition which triggered the pregnancy at puberty. Perhaps a hormonal change in the body may have done this.

“With the possibility of virgin birth being wide open, it does not remain to be all that impossible and unnatural. Where is the need to search for a supernatural explanation of Jesus' birth, or to even go beyond that to the furthest extreme of believing in the birth of a literal 'Son' of God through human birth? When various phenomena, as described above, are observed as a fact of nature why is it hard to believe that the birth of Jesus Christ was a hidden natural phenomenon, brought about by a special design of God? Something happened to Mary which gave that child a miraculous birth, without a man having touched her. It is the Ahmadiyya Muslim believe that this is exactly what happened. Our case is unshakable because no scientist can dismiss it as nonsensical or opposed to the known laws of nature.” (Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah, *Christianity, a Journey from Facts to Fiction*, 1994, p.12)

What was the significance of the virgin birth? Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah explains briefly: “The birth was indeed a great sign for the Israelites. It pointed to the impending transition of prophethood from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael. It also constituted a warning to the Israelites in

[410] Matthew then turns to the **birth of Jesus** after writing his genealogy. **Mary** is first introduced as engaged to **Joseph** and before having any sexual relations with him, she was discovered to be pregnant. How Mary came to conceive Jesus without the agency of a husband has caused two opposing responses from people; some curse her for having illicit relationships (many Jews), while to others (mostly Christians), this is proof that Jesus was a divine being. The middle of the two is more likely to be true, that this event was a miracle of God, however, not a supernatural one which fell outside the laws of nature, but an incredibly rare occurrence where a female gave birth to a child without the agency of a male.

Parthenogenesis (in Greek meaning *virgin birth*) is the production of offspring by a female without any genetic contribution from a male. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association spoke in length about this, he states:

“Parthenogenesis is the asexual development of a female ovum into an individual, without the aid of a male agent. It is observed among many lower forms of life such as aphids and also fish. There is also evidence that parthenogenesis can be a successful strategy among lizards living under low and unpredictable rainfall conditions. In laboratory conditions, mice and rabbit embryos have been developed parthenogenetically to a stage equivalent to halfway through pregnancy, but have then been aborted. In a recent study, scientists found that human embryos could be occasionally activated by parthenogenesis using calcium ionophore as a catalyst. Such research raises the prospect that some early human pregnancy losses may have involved the parthenogenetic activation of the embryo...The possibility of virgin birth has been shown to be scientifically feasible. A report in the Nature Genetics of Oct. 1995 discusses the remarkable case of a three year old boy whose body is derived in part from an unfertilised egg. The researchers examined DNA sequences all along the X chromosomes in the boy's skin and blood and discovered that the X chromosomes in all his cells were identical to each other and derived entirely from his mother. Similarly, both members of each of the 22 other chromosome 7 pairs in his blood were identical and derived entirely from his mother.” (*Christianity, a Journey from Facts to Fiction*, 1994, p.6-7)

Another possible explanation may be *teratoma*, a kind of germ cell tumour which may contain several types of tissue: Connective tissue; hair; bones; teeth; adipose tissue and neural tissue etc. This tumour can form within a woman and possibly create sperm cells as well.

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the sense that they had become spiritually so corrupt and morally so degenerate that no male among them was fit enough to become the father of a Prophet of God." (*The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 4, p.1570).

I'd like to make one final point about the virgin birth of Jesus; a number of writers recently have written that there were in fact a number of 'virgin births' in the ancient world, particularly from the pagan gods, a book made popular authored by Freke and Gandy called *Jesus Mysteries* argued this at length. However, proper scholars and historians have completely ignored the work or debunked it, by simply observing that the book provides absolutely no evidence for any of its claims. One particular scholar has made it abundantly clear:

"Real historians of antiquity are typically scandalized by such assertions – or at least they would be, if they bothered to read Freke and Gandy's book. The authors provide no evidence for their claims concerning the standard mythology of the godmen. They cite no sources from the ancient world that can be checked. It is not that they have provided an alternative interpretation of the available evidence. They have not even cited the available evidence. And for good reason. No such evidence exists." (Bart Ehrman, *Were There *Other* Virgin Births in Antiquity?* Dec 30, 2018, <https://ehrmanblog.org/were-there-other-virgin-births-in-antiquity/>)

Therefore, those who argue that the Christians borrowed from the pagans and that the Holy Quran copied these same traditions are dead wrong. "I don't know of any parallel to the Christian idea that a virgin gave birth to the son of God in any other religion of antiquity." (Ibid)

[411] Joseph was a **righteous** man and after realising that Mary was pregnant, thought it best that he quietly divorce her rather than putting her to shame by publicly accusing her of adultery, which would have been quite dangerous for her, since she may have even been put to death by some overzealous Jews who would have followed the Torah Law to the letter. The Torah stipulates that the adulterer and adulteress be put to death if caught (Leviticus 20:10). It is likely that Joseph initially sought to divorce Mary, being unaware that she became pregnant without the aid of a man and therefore suspected adultery.

[412] Textual Variant

The Syriac Codex Curetonianus reads: *for he will save the world from its sins*. The scribe may well have been uncomfortable with the text saying that he would **save his people**, i.e. the Jews from their sins, and wished to emphasise the global atonement of sins by Jesus rather than the local atonement. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

Commentary

It is possible that Joseph may have seen a vision similar to that of Mary's; about the glad tidings of a son. He therefore changed his mind regarding the divorce and chose to keep his wife. The idea that Jesus would **save his people from their sins** is likely to have originated from the name Jesus/Joshua or Yeshua meaning: *deliverance; rescue; salvation; i.e. primarily physical rescue by God. It also means victory* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

[413] Important Words

παρθένος (*parthenos*) – Noun, nominative, singular, feminine, meaning: *an unmarried young woman; a virgin; maiden; girl* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[414]

The angel in Joseph's dream explains to him the special status the baby Jesus will have. The author Matthew then proceeds to explain to the reader that the birth of the son of Mary was prophesied in the Old Testament, and quotes from the book of Isaiah:

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz,

"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven."

But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test."

And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?"

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." (7:10-16)

However, to argue that the birth of Jesus was prophesied by Isaiah the prophet is riddled with problems: The first is that Matthew is actually quoting from the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), which mis-translates from the original Hebrew text; it does not state that a *virgin* will conceive, but rather the noun עלמה (*al-mah*) is used, which means: *young woman; ripe sexually; maid or newly married* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*) Had the author meant virgin, he would have used the more commonly Hebrew word בתולה (*betulah*) which is used for a virgin. Thus the Hebrew of the text goes against what Matthew is attempting to prove above.

The other difficulty is the context of the Isaiah verses; Ahaz receives a sign from God, that a **young woman** would conceive and bear a son. Before that child will become of age or be able to differentiate between good and evil i.e. 12-15 years, the land which Ahaz is at war with will be deserted. The text makes no mention of a Messiah, read the whole of Chapter 7, and there's no talk about a Messiah or any future saviour figure of any kind. Nor has this text ever been interpreted as a Messianic text by Jews.

Therefore, linguistically and historically, the so-called prophecy of Matthew cannot be applied to Jesus. This is the first attempt in the Gospel of Matthew of trying to locate prophecies of the Messiah and in many ways *force* them to apply to Jesus. As already indicated in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Matthew was writing his gospel for a predominantly Jewish community, and therefore attempted to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and by doing so, often plucked out isolated passages from the Old Testament and forced them to apply to Jesus. We will see this many more times below.

[415] Joseph wakes up from his dream and complies with the instruction of the angel. He refrains from having any sexual relations with Mary until she delivers the child.

[416] Joseph and Mary lived in Bethlehem when Jesus was born, he was visited by three **wise men** (or Magi), of whom little is known. They came from the **east**, which has led many to believe they were from Persia and as such, Zoroastrians who were well versed in astrology.

However, why would Zoroastrians be concerned over the birth of the Jewish Messiah? They couldn't care less, since it was nothing to do with them or their religion. The best explanation is that they were most likely Jews living in the Diaspora (outside of Israel), or east of Jerusalem, who had perhaps witnessed some heavenly signs showing them that the Messiah of Israel was born.

[417] Important Words

προσκυνῆσαι (*proskuneysoi*) – Verb, aorist active infinitive of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*) meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). They came to revere him or as the RSV translates the word: *Pay him homage*. The WEB translates it as *worship*. But this is not the primary meaning of the verb as noted above.

The same verb is used in the book of Daniel describing the action of Nebuchadnezzar who also *paid homage* to Daniel (Daniel 2:46). However, to believe that Nebuchadnezzar *worshipped* Daniel, and Daniel, a (prophet of God) readily accepted it, would be absurd. Furthermore, King Herod of the Jews is reported to have told the wise-men to go and find Jesus so that he too can *pay him homage*, but again, like the above the WEB translates it as *worship*, which again is absurd, since no Jew would worship anything but God Himself.

I am not alone in my preference in the above translation, but other Bible translations too have avoided *worship*, the New Revised Standard Version reads exactly how I have translated it, as have the DARBY, DLNT, NABRE and YLT translations.

Commentary

Apparently the Magi had seen a **star in the east**, and had interpreted this as the birth of the Messiah, or king of the Jews. Later in verse 9 of the same chapter in Matthew the star goes ahead of them till it comes to a rest where the baby Jesus is. So it seems a bit strange that the Magi came to Jerusalem and began to spread rumours of the birth of the Messiah when they had the star to guide them all along.

An alternative interpretation may be that the whole episode was a vision or a prophecy. Whether it really happened or not is uncertain; instead it may refer to the Diaspora Jews in the east, who would accept Jesus as the Messiah, while those in the west would not. This in turn was fulfilled when the Jews of the west, living in and around Jerusalem tried to kill Jesus, and the Jews in the east took him in and accepted his teachings after the crucifixion.

[418] **Herod**, known as Herod the Great was appointed Tetrarch (Governor) of the Jews between 40 BCE – 4 BCE. It was in his reign that Jesus was born, thus making the birth of Jesus not the year 0 as is commonly held, but rather around the year 6 BCE. Although reigning for just less than forty years, his rule was not very stable and he himself was close to going insane: he put to death all those who threatened his rule, including most of his immediate family; sons and his most beloved wife, Mariam. However, within his rule there was some greatness, the most remarkable being the reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple, which began around 20 BCE and finished long after his death, but then was destroyed in 70 CE by the Roman army in what is referred to as the First Jewish War.

[419] Herod may have been **troubled** as he saw this as a threat to his throne, which is understandable, but why the rest of Jerusalem is troubled is uncertain: Herod was incredibly unpopular with the people of Jerusalem. In fact, had news of the birth of the Messiah reached them, they would have rejoiced instead, as it meant the toppling of Herod!

[420] Matthew now has Herod in league with the chief priests of Jerusalem; thus all Jews are from the very beginning of his gospel the enemies of Jesus, seeking to destroy Jesus even as a child. When asked where the Christ is to be born, the Jewish leaders supposedly know from a verse in the Old Testament book of Micah:

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel” (5:2).

Readers will notice though, that the Micah verse is not very similar to the one quoted by Matthew, and that is correct. In fact, it isn't clear where Matthew is quoting from, as he is neither using the Hebrew translation nor the Greek Septuagint. The changing of the phrase *are little to be among the clans of Judah* to *by no means are you least as a leader of Judea* by Matthew brings out a stronger Messianic tone. Matthew did worse though; he altered the passage to fit his 'prophecy'. He leaves out *of Ephrathah* as well, this may in fact be due to Bethlehem of Ephrathah in Micah is not the city of Bethlehem, but a clan: the clan of Bethlehem, who were the son of Caleb's second wife, Ephrathah (1 Chronicles 2:50 and 4:4). Therefore, in its original context, the text of Micah has nothing to do with the coming of the Messiah as our author Matthew argues.

[421] Important Words

See under verse 2 above for the meaning of the above word; Herod did not say he would *worship* the baby Jesus as the WEB translates; that would be blasphemy, but rather he wanted to **pay him homage**.

[422] This verse is very difficult to interpret, and it is even more difficult to visualise what the author had in mind of what actually happened. The behaviour of the star is rather miraculous, since it does not seem to behave like any normal star or comet; rather it seems to be moving along the land and then stops **above the house** of Mary and Joseph. A very odd star indeed: If one were to step outside on a clear night, choose the brightest star in the sky and then attempt to see which house, region or even country it stood over, they would find it impossible to do so. Some Christians have simply admitted that it was no ordinary star, but a miracle! However, this shows gross ignorance of our author Matthew and those Christians since a star is a glowing ball of plasma or fire held together by its own gravity, i.e. a sun! Did an object 100 times bigger than the earth **stand over** the house of Joseph? How is one to read and visualise what the author above is intending to make out? Therefore the above cannot be understood literally, nor can it be historically accurate and must have either been a vision or the invention of the author himself.

[423] Important Words

See under verse 2 above for the meaning of the above word; Joseph and Mary would never have let the Magi *worship* their child as the WEB translates; that would be blasphemy, but rather they **paid him homage**.

[424] No mention is made of the number of Magi, but from this verse, many have assumed that there were three. Their names are said to be Kasper, Balthasar and Melchior (Excerpta Latina Barbari, sixth century).

Earlier they seemed to have been tricked by Herod into finding the child Messiah for him, so that he could kill him. Initially they fall for the trick and without thinking twice carry on with their mission of finding him. Once they do, they rejoice and offer the mother three things: **Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh**. Frankincense was used throughout the ancient world in many religious practices. It is very valuable, sometimes valued as highly as gold, and sought after by many kings. Myrrh, another valuable substance, even more than frankincense, was again sought after and rare in the ancient world. It had various medical properties as well as fragrance.

The story is very pleasing and is an enjoyable read; however, many scholars have cast serious doubts as to whether it is historically accurate. Raymond E. Brown in his book *The Birth of the Messiah* (2007) lists a number of reasons why he thinks the whole story is fictitious: 1) A star behaving like so in Matthew's Gospel would have definitely been noticed by other astrologers around the area, but nothing outside this one gospel mentions such a star. However, this point by Brown is not entirely true, since a comet was noticed by Chinese astronomers in 5 or 4 BCE, but admittedly, it was a comet, not a star as described by Matthew (Hughes, *Star*, p.148-152); 2) Herod and the Jewish leaders were enemies, but the gospel portrays them as working together; 3) It makes little sense that Herod completely relies on strangers (the Magi) to report back to him the whereabouts of the child, when he would have sent further forces to do so; 4) The arrival of the Magi in the small town of Bethlehem would have caused much commotion and made it very easy for Herod to locate the child; and 5) The absence of this in all other gospels.

Further reasons to cast doubt in the story are shown in Luke 2:24: a week later Joseph and Mary go to the Temple to offer sacrifice for their son, but they are unable to afford a lamb and offer pigeons or turtledoves instead. If they were given such expensive gifts by the Magi, they would surely have been able to afford a lamb.

[425] After the departure of the Magi, an angel visits Joseph in a dream and instructs him to flee to **Egypt** as **Herod** is about to search for and kill the child; Egypt being outside the domain of Herod. The miraculous rescue by God of a royal child was very common among the traditions of the Gentiles (Hercules, Romulus and Remus, Sargon, Cyrus) and

amongst the Jews (Moses). Matthew may well have had Moses in mind rather than the Gentile stories since his audience were Jewish Christians as opposed to Gentiles.

[426] Joseph does as he is instructed and takes his family to Egypt, where he remains till the death of Herod. In this sequence of events, Matthew recognises a prophecy in the Old Testament; he quotes from the Old Testament book of Hosea, Chapter 11 verse 1. It would be useful for readers to see verses 1 and 2 to see the verse which Matthew quotes in its original context:

1. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
2. The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Ba'als, and burning incense to idols.

Are these verses really speaking about Jesus as Matthew wants us to believe? If so, then we are to believe that God, when he called Jesus, the latter went away from God and kept sacrificing to the Ba'als (pagan Gods) and kept burning incense to idols. Also, what about the beginning of verse 1? Here it states clearly that the verse is speaking about Israel! The nation Israel has many times been referred to as children of God: Exodus 4:22, Deut 14:1, Romans 8:14, John 1:12.

Matthew seemed to have a habit of trying to link Jesus' life to many ad-hoc and random passages in the Old Testament; he seems to be doing this without much thought either, as the above clearly shows.

[427] When **Herod** sees that he has been tricked by the **Magi**, or that they simply did not obey him, he is infuriated and orders the mass murder of every **infant** in the **Bethlehem** region, which even for Herod seems too cruel an event. It is highly unlikely to have happened for numerous reasons, for a start, it is not mentioned by any other source but Matthew, not even in the works of Josephus, who spoke great lengths about the brutal acts of Herod.

Furthermore, for Herod to wait some two years for the report of the Magi would have been rather silly. It probably would have been easier for Herod to wait at the Temple for the baby Jesus, since he had to be circumcised on the eighth day according to Jewish custom. If this chance was missed, a simple enquiry in the village of Bethlehem would have led him to Jesus. Presumably, if Herod really wanted to find the child, there was a procession of Magi, shepherds (recorded in the Gospel of Luke), and possibly sheep as well for him to follow straight to his objective!

Matthew most likely has derived this story from the killing of the children by Pharaoh in the story of Moses (Exodus 1:21). This is a trait in Matthew's Gospel, where he often finds parallels in the life of Moses and often attempts to relate incidents back to his life. The exile from Egypt reminds the reader of the Exodus, and now the killing of infants.

Attentive readers will notice stark differences in the birth stories of Matthew and Luke (see beginning of Luke). While Matthew records Magi visiting Jesus, Luke has shepherds. Matthew records a flight to Egypt and a massacre of thousands of children, whereas Luke does not mention either of these events, but just a bunch of shepherds witnessing the event.

Interestingly, an alternative is recorded in the apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew; where Jesus is born in a cave, and on the sixth day Mary and Joseph return to Bethlehem, where they have the baby Jesus circumcised on the eighth day. It was only after two full years did the Magi come to find Jesus and so tricked Herod and left without letting the King know. It was then that Herod ordered that any infant of two years old should be killed. As can be seen, this order makes far more sense.

[428] Matthew identifies another prophecy. This time fulfilled by the baby Jesus, or maybe Herod. He quotes Jeremiah 31:15:

“Thus says the Lord: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not (i.e. no longer are around).’”

However, this again seems to be a verse quoted out of context. The entire chapter in Jeremiah has nothing to do with the Messiah, it is rather about the favours of God to the children of Israel. Ramah is a city some eight miles north of Bethlehem. If Herod were to kill all the infants *in that region*, meaning an eight-mile radius so as to include Ramah, then all the infants in Jerusalem too would be killed. It becomes clear that this is another example of a ‘prophecy’ of Matthew, which when looking in context has absolutely nothing to do with the Messiah.

[429] Joseph returns but is still hesitant to return to Judea in fear of Herod’s son and so moves to certain parts of Galilee to avoid detection.

[430] Important Words

Ναζωραῖος (*Nazoraïos*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine. Its meaning or origin is uncertain and it is not mentioned at all in the Old Testament, nor by Josephus, who at one point was commander of the Jewish rebellion, and therefore spoke at length about towns and places in Galilee. It may have existed, and if it did, it would have been a very minor town.

The title **Nazarene** was often used to refer to the early followers of Jesus (Acts 24:5). In its simplest form, it may refer to someone from the town of Nazareth. But various other explanations have been put forward of its possible meaning and origin.

Some have proposed the idea that the term derives from the Hebrew word נֶצֶר (*Netzer*) drawn from Isaiah 11:1, meaning a *stock; stem of a tree; stem of Jesse* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*). Jesus being a descendant of David, his followers were thus called Nazarenes, branches of David so to speak.

Other scholars have argued that Jesus may well have been an Essene or the Founder of the Essenes (the Jewish sect who compiled the Dead Sea Scrolls); the term Nazarene is a hint. Robert Eisenman believes that one of the terms by which the Qumran Community referred to themselves was ‘Keepers of the Covenant’, which in the original Hebrew was ‘Nozrei ha-Brit’. Eisenman derives the word ‘Nazrim’ which is one of the earliest Hebrew designations for ‘Christians’. The Arabic ‘Nasrani’ too, derives from the same word, and so does ‘Nazarene’ (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, 1991, p.174). However, I don’t believe Jesus had affiliations with the Essene community as his teachings differ from the Dead Sea Scrolls too much.

The same is actually the case with regards to the second Messiah; Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) who too is often referred to as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani. In fact, opponents of the Promised Messiah call him and his community ‘Qadianis’ as opposed to Ahmadis (Qadian being the birthplace of Hazrat Ahmad). This is very similar to Jesus and his community also being called Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). History often repeats itself.

Commentary

A final prophecy is ‘found’ by our author Matthew in the birth narratives of Jesus; this one is unique, however, since no such prophecy in the Old Testament exists! No scholar or Christian has ever found any text in the Old Testament matching what Matthew is hinting at above. Some Christians will argue that our author Matthew is saying that Jesus will be despised, since the village of Nazareth was despised by more Jews. However, that is not what Matthew is saying, he is simply saying that there exists a prophecy in the Old Testament mentioning that the Messiah would come from Nazareth, or he would be referred to as a Nazarene. Neither of which is the case.

There are two options to resolve the problem: either Matthew had access to some books of the Old Testament which are now absent from the present Hebrew Bible; or the more likely option is that he had simply heard of a prophecy and added it to his gospel without clarifying whether it existed in the Old Testament. The fact that he states **spoken by the prophets**, the latter being in the plural, may show that he himself could not identify the quotation exactly.

[431] **John the Baptist** is introduced here: he was an ascetic Jewish prophet, who according to the first three gospels was active just before the coming of Jesus. His main task was to preach repentance and make the people ready for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Some scholars believe that John the Baptist was amongst the Jewish sect called the Essenes, who were the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He then left and began openly preaching to the Jews later in his life. This is not unlikely, since Josephus also speaks about spending time with the Essenes (*Life* 2:10-11) in his youth. John may have done the same.

He is called Yahya in the Holy Quran and is said to be a prophet, the son of Zechariah, an answer to the latter's prayers for a righteous offspring (2:39-41).

[432] This is the first time the phrase **kingdom of Heaven** (which seems to be synonymous with *Kingdom of God*) is mentioned. The actual meaning of the phrase is not entirely clear, since there seems to be a variety of meanings applied to it; in the above context it seems to refer to a future event, perhaps the Messianic era. Very much like how *the Hour* is mentioned in the Holy Quran, which has a variety of meanings: being the actual Day of Judgement (7:118); and other times it refers to the Hour when the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) conquered Mecca and began the new era (22:55). Much in the same way, John may be proclaiming that the **Kingdom of God** is at hand, or the Hour is about to come; the beginning of a new era.

In the above verse, it refers to the Kingdom which the Messiah/King would rule. Every kingdom requires a king, and since the Messiah is referred to as being a king, the **Kingdom of Heaven** may well refer to the age of the Messiah, which was not an earthly one, but a spiritual reformation to be brought about in the hearts of the chosen servants of God. They were to repent, admit their sins and re-establish themselves in the fold of the Lord, ushering in a period of sublime purity and peace as had existed in the time of Adam; an age when men would throw off their worldly desires and turn to the worship of God.

When this new era would be formed and come about is also uncertain; for at times it is spoken of as a thing to come, sometime in the future, e.g. in Matt 10:7 Jesus instructs his disciples to go out and proclaim that **The Kingdom of God is near**. But things get a little confusing when in Luke 17:20, when Jesus is asked about the Kingdom of Heaven, he states that it is among his audience already, thus implying that it *has already come*. Could it be that the Kingdom came in-between the time he sent out his disciples in Matthew 10 and when asked about it in Luke 17? Maybe, perhaps by that time, he had set up a community of followers and that established the Kingdom.

At other times it has been interpreted to be the Kingdom established in the second coming of Jesus. This was the way the grandsons of Jude, the brother of Jesus, used the phrase when questioned:

“When asked about the Christ and his Kingdom – what it was like and where and when it would appear – they explained that it was not of this world or anywhere on earth but angelic and in heaven, and would be established at the end of the world, when he (Jesus) would come in glory to judge the quick and the dead and give every man payment according to his works.” (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, published by Penguin Classics in 1965, Book 3; 20:3).

However, in the vast majority of instances, particularly in Matthew's Gospel, it seems to refer to Heaven; the celestial Heaven that is.

[433] As mentioned in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, our author here was using the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources and

therefore copied a lot of it. The above is actually from Mark 1:3, but Matthew tweaks the verse from Mark, in that he quotes the Old Testament correctly; quoting just Isaiah 40:3. Perhaps he checked the prophecy himself and thought to correct the gospel of Mark. For details of this prophecy, see under [Mark 1:3](#).

[434] **John the Baptist** is described in similar terms to the Old Testament prophet Elijah, for Elijah was a hairy man (similar to the **raiment of camel's hair** above) and wore a leather belt around his waist (II Kings 1:8). The Jews believed Elijah to have ascended to Heaven (II Kings 2:11) and that he would descend from heaven before the coming of the Lord (Mal 4:5). For more details of how John was the second coming of Elijah, see notes under [Mark 9:11-13](#).

[435] Verses 5 and 6 are a direct copy of [Mark's 1:5](#). The above speaks of **Baptism**; a ritual based on the commandments laid out in the book of Leviticus in the Torah. Those who are ritually unclean by certain actions must bathe their bodies to become clean again. Various actions rendered a person unclean, including sexual activity between husband and wife and touching something else which was unclean, like a corpse. The baptism performed by John, i.e. dipping people in the river for the remission of their sins echoes what God says to Ezekiel: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ex 36:25). This highlights some sort of cleaning of idolatry and non-Jewish customs, which in turn could have been the objective of John's baptism: to cleanse the people of their sins, lead them to God and bring about a new type of re-birth.

According to the above text, **all Judea and all the region about Jordan went to him** implies that John the Baptist was generally accepted as a prophet by his people. The people came to **confess** their sins: but the concept of confessing one's sins, i.e. openly declaring them and asking for God's forgiveness is not a recognised concept among the Jews. Confession of sins was a private matter, between the person and God, much like in Islam. However, if someone sins against another person, then the sinner should confess in front of the person they sinned against.

As far as public confessions are concerned, it was widespread amongst the pagans and Gentiles. The Egyptians had confessions written down on stone tablets, often read out in public as a warning and example to others (Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions*, 1954, p.55-67). Reports also exist by Roman and Greek writers of the practice of public confessions in order to humiliate themselves among the worshippers of the pagan god Isis (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.142). It seems the act of confession amongst Christians, particularly Roman Catholics, may have been borrowed from these pagan cults and religions. As such, the likelihood that Jews came to John and confessed their sins to him is the invention of the early church. The author Mark (from whom our author Matthew copied) may have heard rumours or previous stories from Churches about John the Baptist and then wrote them in his gospel.

[436] The **Pharisees** are often described as the ancestors of present day Orthodox Jews. The majority of other sects died out shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Once the others were out of the picture, the Pharisees were no longer referred to by that name but became normative/mainstream Judaism. For a much more in-depth description of them, see notes under [Mark 2:16](#).

[437] There isn't a great deal of information about the **Sadducees**. The name itself probably came from the Priest name Zadok (who lived in prophet David's time) in Hebrew; Tsaddiq. The Sadducees were opponents of the Pharisees and generally belonged to the wealthier classes of the Jews; many of the Priests of the Temple were Sadducees, and likewise much of the Sanhedrin (Jewish Council) comprised of Sadducees. What differentiated them most from the Pharisees was their rejection of the Oral Law and the afterlife.

[438] After introducing John the Baptist in the previous chapter; and his baptising in the river Jordan, Matthew notes that Pharisees and Sadducees come to him to be baptised as well, resulting in John delivering a stark warning and him refusing to baptise them. Perhaps it was this that fuelled their disbelief in his prophethood as Matthew 21:25

shows. Or more likely, they simply came to investigate what was going on, and when John saw them he cried out against them.

[439] From the above, it seems that a certain number of Jews held the view that since they (the Jewish people) had a covenant with God (Genesis 17:7) that they would either be spared hell or would visit hell for a very limited period of time. The viewpoint is also echoed in the Holy Quran:

“And they (the Jews) say; ‘The fire shall not touch us except for a few days.’ Say; ‘Have you taken from Allah a promise? So Allah will never break His promise. Or do you say of Allah what you know not?’” (2:81)

The Quran and John the Baptist for that matter reject this idea and both in fact warn them of such baseless hope. While establishing the covenant with Abraham in the Genesis account, Abraham simply accepts without any consideration for his progeny, but in the Holy Quran, he asks God further:

“And remember when his Lord tried Abraham with commandments and he fulfilled them. He said; ‘Verily, I am going to make you a leader of man.’ He (Abraham) said; ‘And of my offspring?’ He (God) said; My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.” (2:125).

Thus establishing that one’s ancestry does not enable him or her to attain salvation, but it is through their righteousness and the grace of God.

[440] This denotes urgency; the time is coming that the bad tree which does not bear good fruit will be cut, meaning those people who do not produce good actions will be cut and thrown into the fire.

[441] For a detailed discussion on the **Holy Spirit** see under [Mark 1:8](#).

[442] After warning the Pharisees and Sadducees above, John then foretells the coming of the Messiah who would potentially punish them, or be the cause of their punishment (verse 12). Verse 11 though is a copy of [Mark 1:7-8](#), but Matthew makes a couple of interesting changes to the text: John now says **carry** instead of *untie* and adds **with fire** when referring to baptism. The former point may reflect a later Rabbinic teaching, which teaches that a disciple should do for his teacher anything a slave would do except *take off his shoes* (b. Ketub. 96a). Matthew, being a Jewish Christian probably thought it inappropriate for John to *untie/take off the shoes* of Jesus and therefore changed it to **carry**.

The baptism **with fire** may refer to some sort of punishment as the next verse shows, or cleansing, since fire is often used to burn away impurities. There might be a hint or subtle relation to the burning bush spoken of in the story of prophet Moses in Exodus 3:2.

[443] Here John talks about Jesus sifting through the people, gathering the true and pious ones and removing the immoral ones. It is they who will be thrown into the **fire**, this is the first time the act of judging and judgement is given to Jesus in the gospels and is particularly explicit in Matthew’s Gospel, see Matthew 25:33. As explained there, the role of judging was rather incorrectly given to Jesus.

[444] Jesus, like every other Jew came along to be baptised as well. The fact that Jesus is being baptised should cause no alarm, as stated in 3:5, **all** of Judea came to be baptised by John. But since the Messiah *did* hold a superior position to that of John, Jesus must have not yet been informed that he was the Messiah at this point.

[445] In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus came and while coming out of the water (from the baptism) then saw the vision of the dove and God spoke calling Jesus His son. Matthew adds

verses 14 and 15, obviously uncomfortable with the idea that Jesus the *son of God*, who was sinless, was coming to John to be baptised in the baptism of repentance. He resolved it by adding a conversation between John and Jesus to illustrate the superiority of Jesus over John. However, neither Mark nor Luke in their gospels is to be aware of this conversation: had it really happened and had the other gospel writers been aware of it, they would have surely written it down as well. Thus it is more likely that the above words were the invention of Matthew.

[446] Again, the source of our author for the above story is the Gospel of Mark (see [Mark 1:9-11](#)). However, this verse is different; whilst in Mark's Gospel, Jesus is addressed: *Thou art my beloved son*, in Matthew God seems to address John, telling John that **this is my beloved son**. Well, which was it? Who received the revelation - John or Jesus? Or maybe they both did! At the same time, but then why didn't Mark say that John received a revelation as well? And why didn't Matthew tell his readers that Jesus received the revelation? Furthermore, what would be the point in telling John that **this is my beloved son** and not telling Jesus? Therefore Mark's version seems to be more historically accurate.

[447] Like the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:12-13), Matthew also has Jesus whizzed off into the **wilderness** by the Spirit after it settled on him; but the account in Matthew is much longer than Mark. Readers are recommended to see notes under [Mark 1:12](#) for the apparent discrepancy between the first three gospels and the gospel of John regarding Jesus' activities following the baptism.

[448] Jesus not only fasted for forty days as in Mark, but Matthew added **forty nights** as well, hinting that he abstained from food altogether for that period of time, and afterwards he was no doubt **hungry**. For a detailed discussion on **fasting**, see under [Mark 1:13](#), where I explain that it was highly unlikely that Jesus abstained from food and water for such a long period of time, but simply lived in the wilderness with minimal sustenance.

[449] Matthew now adds more details to the wilderness experience than the Gospel of Mark. Full on discussions occur between Jesus and the Devil. Due to Jesus' hunger, the Devil tempts him to turn the **stones** into **bread** for himself. However, the latter passes the test, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, indicating that he will not perform any miracle without the permission of God and that he is fully obedient to God's commands.

[450] Here Satan is quoting Psalms 91:11, 12. The Psalm is a beautiful poem praising those who are righteous and live under the Shadow of God. For a detailed discussion of the phrase **son of God**, see notes under [Mark 3:11](#).

[451] Jesus replies quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, warning the Israelites not to test God, or to be ungrateful to Him.

[452] The discussion ends with Deuteronomy 6:13. The temptations of the Devil portrayed in the above passages are not to be taken literally, but only illustrate that Jesus resisted them. The famous Jewish scholar, Geza Vermes has pointed out the similarity of this passage to the Talmud and Midrash, where arguments are often comprised of quotations from biblical passages (*The Authentic Gospels of Jesus*, 2003, p.195).

There are a few problems with the above account as well, firstly there are no witnesses to the event, and secondly, Jesus seems to be quoting from the *Greek* Old Testament, which would not have been the case with the historical Jesus, since he knew Hebrew, so why quote from a translation when you know the original language?

Finally, it is worthwhile to note the source of the above story; this is the text or document commonly known as Q (see [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the

beginning of this book for more details). This is the text which Matthew and Luke both seemed to have access to and copied from, along with the gospel of Mark.

[453] Matthew has found another prophecy for Jesus! This time he quotes Isaiah 9:1-2:

“But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”

While Matthew interprets the above to refer to Jesus, from its own context, it is actually referring to the exiling of the Israelite tribes since the first sentence regarding gloom and anguish would refer to the exile. There is no gloom and anguish in Jesus' life so far, so it can't refer to him.

[454] **Simon**, son of Jonah, was one of the chief apostles of Jesus. He was given the surname Peter, meaning Rock in Greek and in Aramaic Kefa or Cephas. He was a fisherman before he encountered Jesus, coming from Capernaum where he owned a house: living with him were presumably his wife and mother-in-law. It is uncertain whether he had a family though, since Paul informs the Corinthians that Peter had with him his wife, who accompanied him on his journeys (1 Cor 9:5) but no children are mentioned.

In the gospels, Peter is often portrayed as the chief apostle, often being addressed by Jesus and being the spokesperson for the other disciples. As already mentioned in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, the early Church was divided into two: the Paulines and the Petrines; the latter following Peter's views in his preaching missions, which involved preaching to Jews (and maybe some Gentiles) and inviting them to join the Jewish Church; that being those original followers of Jesus who remained Jews and followed the Torah Law.

Some Christians, particularly Roman Catholics may view Peter to be the head of the Church after the departure of Jesus, but this isn't the case, as it was Jesus' own brother James who became its leader, and from whom Peter himself took orders. It does seem however, that Peter was the chief Jewish apostle or missionary, in that he was the chief Christian who travelled and preached the message of Jesus while James remained in Jerusalem running the Church.

[455] **Andrew** was the brother of Peter and presumably lived with him as well in Capernaum. According to Mark, Matthew and Luke, he was a fisherman like his brother, but the Gospel of John has him and Peter being disciples of John the Baptist, who after hearing their Master (John) point out Jesus, leave him and follow Jesus.

[456] Why Jesus calls Peter and his brother **fishers of men** is rather confusing. It echoes scripture where God turns evil men into fish and they are dragged out by hooks and nets (Habakkuk 1:14-15). The opposite seems to be the case above though; that Jesus calls his disciples **fishers of men**, so that they can go and save men makes no sense. How is being caught by fishermen in a net a good thing for fish? They end up suffocating and dying!

If Jesus did say the above, the context must be different to the above, or at least he would have said more, since it must have meant that he was making his disciples excellent preachers of the faith. If Jesus did not say it, then our author Mark simply inherited the saying from a Church tradition, and being unaware of its context, simply added it here without much thought, thus inventing something quite odd.

[457] **James** was another member of the twelve apostles, whose rank seems to be quite high as he was one of the three who witnessed The Transfiguration (Mark 9: 2-10). Even

though he seems quite important, the gospels contain very little information about him; however, he is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles where his death is spoken of under instruction of Herod Agrippa (41-44 CE).

[458] **John**, is the brother of James above. He and his brother are portrayed as typical Galileans; who were portrayed rather poorly in Jerusalem circles; they were often taunted for their lack of knowledge of the Torah and specific details of the Law; for example in Judea work had to cease at midday on the eve of the Passover, but for the Galileans this rule was extended to the entire day due to their lack of knowledge of such details (mPesahim 4:5).

John and his brother James were nick-named *sons of thunder* by Jesus (Mark 3:17). But neither of the brothers is mentioned by name in the fourth gospel, even though Christian tradition has it that John was the author of the gospel, yet this is very unlikely. For further details see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book.

[459] The calling of the first disciples illustrated by Matthew is very deceiving. The image portrayed is that the fishermen were so overawed by Jesus' order that they dropped everything and complied with his instruction immediately. But reading the other gospels, the reader can see there is more to it than what Matthew (and Mark whom he copied from) portrays. The story above has some similarities with the calling of Elisha by Elijah in 1 Kings 19:19-21. There Elijah *casts* his mantle over Elisha like the *casting* of the nets above; Elisha then asks permission to kiss his *father* and mother before following Elijah, but the sons of Zebedee show more devotion by simply leaving their *father* in the boat with the other workers.

A similar *calling* story is attested in first century Greek literature as well;

“And indeed, once when I went to the house of a lad, a son of extremely prosperous parents, I reclined in a banquet hall adorned all about with inscriptions and gold, so that there was no place where you could spit. Therefore, when something lodged in my throat, I coughed and glanced around me. Since I had no place to spit, I spat at the lad himself. When he rebuked me for this, I retorted, ‘Well then, so and so, so you blame me for what happened and not yourself? It was you decorated the walls and pavement for the banquet hall, leaving only yourself unadorned, as a place fit to spit onto!’ He answered, ‘You appear to be criticising my lack of education, but you won’t be able to say this anymore, I don’t intend to fall one step behind you.’ From the next day after, he distributed his property to his relatives and followed me.” (Pseudo-Diogenes 38:2-5).

Our author may have been familiar with this or other such stories and emulated them.

[460] The **Decapolis** was a group of ten cities in the east of the Roman Empire. The cities included in this group were Gerasa in Jordan; Scythopolis in Israel; Hippos in Israel; Gadara in Jordan; Pella in Jordan; Philadelphia, modern day Amman, the capital of Jordan; Al Husn in Jordan; Capitolias in Jordan; Canatha in Syria; Arabella in Jordan; Raphana in Jordan; and Damascus, the capital of modern Syria.

[461] This is the first verse which begins Matthew's *Beatitudes*: Right blessings recounted by Jesus. In the first, Jesus is blessing or giving glad tidings to the **poor**, and to them he is promising the kingdom of heaven. **Poor in spirit** makes little sense, what does **in spirit** imply? It is more likely that Jesus said just **poor**, since Luke, too, records the above tradition as just *poor* (Luke 6:20).

Such a teaching is also present in the Hadith (sayings) of the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sa'id: A man passed by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked a man sitting beside him, "What is your opinion about this (passer-by)?" He replied, "This (passer-by) is from the noble class of people. By Allah, if he should ask for a lady's hand in marriage, he ought to be given her in marriage, and if he intercedes for somebody, his intercession will be accepted. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) kept quiet, and then another man passed by and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked the same man (his companion) again, "What is your opinion about this (second) one?" He said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! This person is one of the poor Muslims. If he should ask a lady's hand in marriage, no-one will accept him, and if he intercedes for somebody, no one will accept his intercession, and if he talks, no-one will listen to his talk." Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "This (poor man) is better than such a large number of the first type (i.e. rich men) as to fill the earth." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 76, Number 454, made available on www.sunnah.com).

There is another possible interpretation of the term *poor*; it may actually refer to the community and followers of Jesus. The Ebionites were early Jewish Christians who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, but did not believe him to be a divine being, but rather a mortal man. See under [Mark 10:22](#) for a detailed discussion on the Ebionites.

[462] Jesus' teaching of complete reliance on God, and separation from family may be linked to **mourning**.

[463] Jesus is echoing David here: "But the meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity (Psalms 37:11). The Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also taught the same:

Haritha b. Wahb reported that he heard Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) as saying:

May I not inform you about the inmates of Paradise? They said: Do this, of course. Thereupon Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) said: Every humble person who is considered to be humble if he were to adjure in the name of Allah, He would fulfil it. He then said: May I not inform you about the denizens of Hell-Fire? They said: Yes. And he said: Every haughty, fat and proud (person). (Sahih Muslim, Book 040, Number 6833, made available on www.sunnah.com).

[464] The above verse does not seem to refer to those who are hungry and thirsty for food, i.e. the poor, but rather to those who are **hungry** and **thirsty** to attain righteousness and closeness to God. These people will find that their struggles and strivings will soon come to an end where they will attain their goal and will be satisfied, if not in this world, in the next. It may also allude to fasting of some sort.

[465] This is a universal teaching, which the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also stressed: "The Prophet said, 'He who is not merciful to others, will not be treated mercifully.'" (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 42, made available on www.sunnah.com).

[466] Jesus is giving glad tidings to the **pure in heart**, who are able to control their desires and not be tempted by evil that perverts the heart. Their reward will be that they will see God, again if not in this life, in the next.

This verse is interesting for another reason as well; the Syriac version of the Bible, dated to the mid-fourth century CE or early fifth century CE, records the above passage as follows: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see *l'alāhā*." The final word being similar to the personal name of God according to Islam: *Allah*.

Sadly, a number of modern Christians have attempted to argue (very poorly) that the Islamic name of God, *Allah*, was the moon god for the pagans. It was heavily propagated by the Christian Evangelist Robert Morey in his pamphlet "The Moon-god Allah: In Archeology of the Middle East". It is difficult to argue against the point since no ancient

manuscript, artefact, nor any historical data supports it. Nor is there any evidence that Arab pagans even referred to their moon god as Allah.

The preachers still attempt to push this idea forward; the strongest argument being the presence of the crescent moon on some mosques and the flags of Pakistan and Turkey. But these are much later developments. There were no crescent moon images on the flags and standards of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), rather the image was brought about by the much later Ottoman Empire.

The name *Allah* was known to the Arabs before Islam, and they would refer to the Supreme God as *Allah*. The above example in the Syriac gospels shows that as well. The Quran itself clarifies and refutes the theory that Allah was the previous moon god too; the Quran quotes the pagans themselves in their reply when asked who was it who pressed the moon and the sun into service:

“And if you ask them; ‘Who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?’ They surely say; ‘Allah.’ How then they are deviating *from the truth?*” (Holy Quran, 29:62)

As the above verse was revealed in the Meccan period of the prophet’s (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) life, disbelievers would have cried out: “No, Allah is the moon god, and so we would never say that He pressed the moon into service!” But since Allah was never the moon god, but the supreme god of the pagans too, they would reply in the same fashion as the above verse states.

With the lack of any evidence, the Quranic verse above and the Syriac gospel naming God as Allah, it can be argued without any doubt that the claim that Allah was the pagan moon god is only the invention of some modern Christian preachers. The above verse sheds further proof of the absurdity of the claim.

[467] Making peace is the central notion of all religions. This is the essence of this verse that glad tidings are given to those who make every effort to bring about peace in the world. The famous Jewish teacher Hillel would also exhort his followers to become *peace lovers, and peace makers* (Talmud, mAB 1:12). By doing so, the people would in effect become sons of God, which does not mean that they would become divine, but as already shown under Mark 3:11, they would be given the title *son of God* which was a title of extreme closeness to God.

[468] This Beatitude differs slightly to the others, and may point to the fact that it was narrated by Jesus *after* his crucifixion, as persecution of his followers did not begin until *after* he was proclaimed a criminal by the Jews and Romans. There is absolutely no hint of any persecution of Jesus and his followers thus far in Matthew’s Gospel, nor in fact any persecution of the disciples before Jesus is arrested, but only occurs afterwards in the beginning of Acts of the Apostles where there is plenty. Thus all the evidence points to the above Beatitude being a post crucifixion saying.

[469] The two last Beatitudes are linked with verse 10, and so point to a saying after Jesus’ crucifixion, since they are about the persecution of the Christians. There is also a sudden change in whom Jesus is addressing; from *Blessed are those* to **Blessed are you**.

Overall, the Beatitudes are not wholly unique to Jesus, and do have parallels in other works outside the New Testament; the following are recorded in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

“Blessed is... with a pure heart and does not slander with his tongue.
Blessed are those who hold her (Wisdom’s) precepts and not hold to the ways on iniquity.

Blessed are those who rejoice in her, and do not burst forth in ways of folly.

Blessed are those who seek her with pure hands, and do not pursue her with a treacherous heart.

Blessed is the man who has attained Wisdom, and walks in the Law of the Most High." (Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea scrolls in English*, 1998, Beatitudes, 4Q525).

It is likely that the style of speech, beginning with **Blessed are you** was a common teaching method employed by Jewish teachers in and around the time of Jesus.

[470] This verse is difficult to interpret since the meaning is very vague. The **earth** is not the soil or land, but rather the *world*. If salt loses its qualities and becomes tasteless, it becomes worthless and is of no value. However, this is impossible, and in like manner it is impossible for the disciples to lose their qualities and become worthless.

[471] Verses 14 to 16 are an expansion of the same saying in [Mark 4:21](#). Here Jesus gives a further analogy and instructs the disciples that they should go out and shine before men. Doing so, men will see and witness the **good works** and glorify God. The emphasis is on works here; this seems to be a direct argument against Paul who argued in many of his letters that salvation lies in faith and not works (Galatians 2). Matthew here is stressing the importance of works and is in line with James the brother of Jesus, who likewise writes in his letter (James) against the ideas of Paul.

[472] Matthean Scholar Ulrich Luz speaks at length on this passage; he argues that the word **fulfil** does not refer to the predictive or prophetic function of scripture, but rather must be the antithesis (opposite) of **destroy**. He argues that Jesus came to affirm the Law, and to bring the Law into a reality through his teachings and life (*Commentary of Matthew, Hermeneia Series* 2001, p.214). Michelle Slee agrees and expands on what Luz argues and stresses that there is no indication here that Jesus' teachings are replacing the Law (*The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE*, 2003, p.137).

The context of the above passage within the chapter is quite important as well. Chapter 5 of Matthew begins with Jesus teaching the Beatitudes. He then instructs his disciples that they are the light of the world. In essence, this can be seen as another mission, in that Jesus is saying that the disciples are not to hide away but rather go out and present themselves teaching the masses what they have learnt from him. What have they learnt from him thus far? Jesus has just taught the Beatitudes, but Jesus now is clarifying that this is not the only thing the disciples are to preach; the Beatitudes are not to replace the Torah Law just in case some may have thought so. He is thus clarifying to the disciples, that he did not come to annul the Law, but rather uphold it.

[473] The interpretation of verse 18 must agree with verse 17. The key word is **until**, but what does this mean? Some Christians may argue that it is referring to Jesus' death and resurrection that the Law is to be followed **until** that occurs. However, this does not go in line with the earlier part of the verse, speaking of **heaven and earth passing away**, which implies eternity. Furthermore, in the next verse, Jesus strengthens the importance of the Law.

[474] This verse is simply an extension of the commandments laid out in the previous two verses. The least of the commandments is referring to every aspect of the Law. To the readers of Matthew's Church, it may refer to the smallest commandments mentioned by Jesus, such as the tithing of herbs (23:23-24).

The latter part about the **least in the kingdom of Heaven** for those who break the commandments has two possible interpretations. If they were to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, they would be in the smallest place. The second interpretation is that the phrase is in parallel to the first clause (**least of these** commandments) for rhetorical purposes and it meant total exclusion. The second is more likely as Matthew's understanding of Jesus seems to stress the importance of the Law to such an extent, that it makes little sense to have people join the community without Torah observance and accepting them to be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

What does the above imply? Basically, for Jesus, observing the commandments in the Torah was *essential*, which goes completely against the majority modern Christian understanding, who does not observe the commandments of the Torah. Instead, sadly, most modern Christians jump on the opinions and views of Paul, who abrogates the Torah Law (Ephesians 2:15). According to the above, the best position Paul and his followers have would have been the **least in the Kingdom of Heaven**, if not total exclusion. It is truly sad that most modern Christians have preferred to choose Paul over their own ‘Saviour’ Jesus.

[475] This verse shows the level of Torah obedience required by Jesus in Matthew; is to go *beyond* that of the **scribes** and **Pharisees**. The author Matthew stresses the level of Torah observance to show members of his Church and outside that they were still strict Jews, not only strict but even greater than the Pharisees.

[476] Textual Variant

Two old manuscripts (Codex Sinaiticus and Bezae) read: ...**everyone who is angry with his brother *without cause* shall be...** The Christian scribes thought to soften Jesus’ bold statement, to perhaps justify anger if it is for a good reason (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.133). In other words, the Christian scribes thought and felt they could correct the saying of Jesus, as is shown many times in this book.

[477] Important Words

ῥακά (*Raca*) – which is transliterated from the Aramaic meaning: used as a term of verbal abuse, *blockhead, numbskull, fool!* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[478] Important Words

συνεδριον (*Sanhedrin*); It should come as no surprise that Jesus speaks of the Sanhedrin, since it meant a Jewish Council, and Jesus being a Jew would have modelled his community on some similarities to the main Jewish community, and Matthew being a Jewish Christian would have had no problem stating such concepts.

[479] Important Words

μωρός (*more*) – Adjective, vocative singular, masculine of μωρος (*moros*) meaning: *foolish; stupid; intellectually weak; lacking in foresight* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). This in fact is the word from which the English *moron* comes from!

[480] The following sayings are called the *Antitheses*. These at first glance appear to be contradicting the Torah Law; however, a closer study shows the opposite: Jesus is in fact sharpening the Law, cutting at the very root of evil to prevent people from breaking the commandments. The famous Jewish Scholar Geza Vermes has also argued that Jesus did not abrogate the Torah Law; he argues that the aim of Jesus was the prevention of murder, but cutting at the root cause of the hostility. He states that those scholars (most often Christian) who imagine that Jesus is abrogating the Law should read their New Testament more carefully, since this is not an abrogation, but rather a reinterpretation of the Torah (*The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*, 2003, p.204-205).

Also, Jesus’ instruction is not new, in fact there are many similar sayings in Jewish literature; the Dead Sea Scrolls contain numerous punishments for outbreaks of anger from members within their community (1QS 6:25-26 and 7:2-5). In the Rabbinic texts, there are plenty of statements about anger-management, e.g. ‘In anger a wise man’s wisdom abandons him so that even Moses forgot the halakah (Jewish Laws) when he became angry (B. Pesah 66b). Yet, no one has ever suggested that the above statements were against any part of the Torah Law. Jesus’ instruction not to hate one’s brother is also attested in the Old Testament; in Leviticus 19:17 it states: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart,” thus Jesus in fact is confirming the Law by quoting and interpreting it with another section of the Law.

[481] This verse seems to be a kind of variant of the saying of Jesus in [Mark 11:25](#). The overall message is the same however; the importance of forgiveness.

[482] Similar to the above saying, Jesus is teaching people that when being accused of something, they should try to make peace with their accuser before being brought in front of the Judge. Linking to the Kingdom of God, people should make peace with their fellow brothers before they pass away and are brought in front of the ultimate judgement with God.

[483] Jesus quotes the Old Testament commandment regarding **adultery**. Not only is the prohibition about committing the foul act, but Jesus internalises it as well, instructing his disciples not to even think or look at anyone lustfully. The Holy Quran too has a similar command:

“And go not near to adultery, verily, it is a foul thing and it is an evil way.”
(Holy Quran, 17:33).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi explain this further:

“Another direction is: Approach not adultery. This means that one should avoid all occasions that might incite one’s mind in that direction, and should eschew all the paths that might lead to this vice. He who indulges in this vice carries his viciousness to the extreme. The way of adultery is an evil way as it obstructs one’s progress towards the goal and is extremely harmful to the achievement of the purpose of life. Those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste through the adoption of other means; for instance, through fasting or dieting or exercise.” (*The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, 2017, p.47).

[484] Verse 29 is a copy of Mark 9:47, and verse 30 is from Mark 9:43. The sayings are the same, but when and where Jesus said them are different in Mark and Matthew. For a detailed analysis of these verses, see under [Mark 9:41-50](#).

[485] Important Words

πορνείας (*porneas*) – Noun, genitive, singular, feminine from πορνεία (*porneia*) meaning: *fornication, sexual immorality, prostitution, extramarital intercourse* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). While the dictionary meaning is quite standard, scholars have attempted to analyse what exactly the word entails. It could not simply mean *adultery*, since there is an easier word μοιχᾶται (*moichao*) for that which Matthew uses at the end of the verse. What does sexual immorality entail therefore?

Three scholars lately have analysed its usage throughout the period around Jesus, by both Greek writers and Jewish writers and come to the conclusion that it entails not just sexual immorality outside of marriage, but *within* as well, e.g. sex with one’s wife while she was pregnant, or during menstruation. According to some Jewish writers like Philo, sex without the intention of procreation was a kind of πορνεία (*porneia*), therefore having sex with a woman who was barren was included (David Wheeler-Reed, Jennifer W. Knust and Dale B. Martin, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 137, No. 2 (Summer 2018), pp. 383-398).

That would be the definition of the Greek word, and which our author Matthew meant to imply. Jesus obviously did not speak Greek, and the Aramaic word he used would be impossible to know. However, Jesus would not have simply meant adultery, but basically, any form of sexual immorality would have been included, including with one’s wife. He might have had sex during menstruation and anal sex in mind as well.

[486]

Jesus gives the above instruction in the Gospel of Mark as well, this time [10:11-12](#), but the instruction is different in Matthew, in that in Matthew Jesus actually permits divorce,

but only in the extreme case of adultery. His view was much in line with the Shammai school of thought in ancient Judaism, where one was permitted to divorce one's wife if she committed adultery. But the Hillel school of thought had relaxed the ruling and permitted divorce even on trivial matters, such as the wife's cooking. Jesus seems to agree with the former.

This view of Jesus actually goes *against* what Paul states in his first letter to the Corinthians where he states that Jesus forbade a woman from marrying another man if she got divorced (1 Cor 7:11). This stricter opinion is recorded in the Gospels of Mark and Luke (Luke 16:18).

So which is correct? Did Jesus permit divorce if the partner committed adultery? (Matthew) Or not? (Paul, Mark and Luke). Matthew's version is clearly more sensible and most likely correct.

[487] Jesus is speaking of bearing false witness, he quotes the Old Testament book of Leviticus 19:12: 'And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.' Also in Deuteronomy 23:23 : 'You shall be careful to perform what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.'

The Old Testament verses above stress the importance of keeping vows and carrying them out as promised. However, at the time of Jesus, it seems that many Jews had the habit of taking unnecessary oaths. The Old Testament never speaks of swearing by heaven, or earth or Jerusalem, which may have become a habit of the Jews at that time. Jesus prohibits this. In fact, the same teaching is repeated by Jesus' contemporaries as well; Philo for examples writes: 'That being which is the most beautiful, and the most beneficial to human life, and suitable to rational nature, swears not itself, because truth on every point is so innate within him that his bare word is accounted as an oath. Next to not swearing at all, the second best thing is to keep one's oath.' (Decalogue, 84).

Josephus talks about the Essenes in the same manner: 'They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace, whatsoever they say also is firmer than an oath, but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury.' (Jewish Wars, translated by William Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2001, Book II, 135).

Therefore Jesus is teaching what many others of his contemporaries had taught; the avoidance of taking unnecessary oaths and the importance of simply saying **yes** or **no**. Those who argue that Jesus is abrogating some of the Torah Law are only displaying ignorance of Jesus' Jewish setting and customs.

[488] Jesus is quoting Exodus 21:24; the Retaliation Law. However, Jesus teaches about controlling one's anger which in turn may embarrass your opponent who strikes you, or going one step further from what an opponent may force you to do. There has been an on going debate on how literal these sayings should be; should one really turn the other cheek when slapped? Or is it more of a symbolical saying, to emphasise humbleness and potential methods of accepting persecution but reducing it by causing embarrassment for the persecutors?

There is no doubt that abiding by the above instruction literally causes huge problems! The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) elaborates on this:

"This is not morality, nor can such a teaching be based on the principles of wisdom. For if this were true, every army in the Christian world would have to be demobilised, and all of their weapons of war would have to be destroyed; the Christian world would have to live a life of servitude, because if someone were to ask them for their shirt, they would be obliged to give them their cloak as well. The teaching states that if someone forces a Christian to walk one mile, they ought to

walk with them for two. In such circumstances, the Christians would be faced with momentous difficulties. If they were to act upon this teaching, they would not only be deprived of the necessities of life, but would have all their comfort stripped from them. For if someone were to demand their possessions, they would be left with nothing, and if a Christian sought to find work, they would be forced into labour without wages.

In short, this teaching is greatly emphasised, and the Christian clergy can be seen to preach it in the public, vigorously praising this teaching, but when a practical example is sought after, nothing can be found. It is as though all this is limited to words alone, and nothing is to be acted upon." (*Mulfuzat*, vol II, published in 2019, p.151)

The context of the saying should be borne in mind; Exodus 21:24 does not speak of *personal* vengeance, but rather gives the *judges* of Israel the right to carry out the punishment on criminals. But in the case of Jesus and the Jews around his time, the law was controlled by the Romans and Jews were unable to carry out numerous punishments such as the death sentence.

Who are the oppressors now? It may well have been some Roman soldiers or officials who may have taken advantage of some of the Jews; what Jesus is instructing the people is that if they are forced to carry something a mile for a soldier, carry it two miles with a smile, or if struck turn the other cheek. This would lead to better results than attempting to slap the soldier back! However, it *should not* be applied in all scenarios; as such acts could lead to lawlessness and chaos. Furthermore, not even Jesus followed this literally; when struck by an officer of the High Priest, Jesus demanded an explanation rather than turning the other cheek (John 18:23).

Some Christians have argued again that Jesus is contradicting the Old Testament Law and abrogating it, bringing it to an end. Yet this isn't the case at all, at the time of Jesus, many of the Jews became rather rough and hard-hearted, and Laws such as *an eye for an eye* were the focus of many of them. But the softer compassionate side of the Law was being ignored, such as Deut 32:35 where God says that: "*Vengeance is Mine...*" Even Paul understood the compassionate elements of the Old Testament when he quoted from Deut 32:35 advising the Roman Church to "never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Romans 12:19). Such teachings were forgotten and Jesus was only reminding his audience of their own Law.

A small note about the Holy Quran would not be out of place here; whilst the Old Testament contains a teaching of vengeance in one place and then compassion in another, and Jesus teaches only compassion. The Holy Quran combines the two in one verse, opting for the middle path:

"And the recompense for an injury is an injury, one similar, but whoso forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah, verily He loves not the wrong-doers." (Holy Quran, 42: 41).

Thus, this illustrates the complete and perfect teachings of Islam.

[489] The WEB and KJV record *tax*-collectors instead of **Gentiles** in the above verse. This is based on very late manuscripts, while the correct reading; **Gentiles** is based on earlier manuscripts. Hence the reason why most modern Bible translations record **Gentile**. Some say that it was a copyist error, accidental from a slip of the eye. While others say it may well have been intentional, see possible reasons below.

[490] The commandment of **loving** your own people is found in Leviticus 19:18. But the latter part of **hating your enemy** is *not* found anywhere in the Old Testament, nor anything similar to it. Therefore, it is likely that Jesus is in fact quoting a popular tradition or saying of his day, which not only goes against what Jesus teaches but even the Old

Testament itself contradicts such sayings. In Exodus God instructs the Israelites to be good to their enemies:

"If you meet your enemy's ox or his ass going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the ass of one who hates you lying under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it, you shall help him to lift it up" (23:4-5).

It is this teaching which Jesus is emphasising and attempting to bring back to the Jews. It is interesting to note that two groups of people are spoken of as *common* people, or at least people whom Jesus' disciples are *not* to imitate: the **tax-collectors** and the **Gentiles**. Many Christians choose not to comment on these verses for obvious reasons, since Jesus is in fact teaching his disciples *not* to be like tax-collectors and Gentiles (non-Jews), thus showing the extreme Jewishness of Jesus. Such a teaching cannot be reconciled with later Pauline teachings of accepting Gentiles into the Church as they are, and as already stated in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Matthew was a Petrine Christian and thus would never have accepted Gentiles into his community without them first converting to Judaism and therefore being Gentiles no more.

[491] In order to please God and attain true righteousness, people must offer alms *only* for His sake. Jesus' words are in fact echoed by the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Narrated Abu Huraira; The Prophet said, "Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His shade on the day when there will be no shade except His... a person who practises charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given' (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 24, Number 504, made available on www.sunnah.com).

Furthermore, the Holy Quran does not condemn giving charity in the open, for it states:

"Those who spend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, for them, their reward is with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them nor shall they grieve."
(Holy Quran, 2:275).

Explaining this verse, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association says:

"A Muslim has to spend his wealth in the cause of Allah not only in such a way and at such a time that others may be induced to follow his good example by noticing his charity, but also at such a time and in such a way that even the recipient of his charity may not know the donor." (*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 1, p.343)

Thus the middle ground is set in Islam; where the giving of charity in the open is advisable so as to encourage others to give, but also, in secret, to prevent any form of boasting.

[492] Similar to the above, praying to God is also done in a private manner, and not to be done in front of people for the sake of pleasing them or boasting. Similar passages are found in the Holy Quran:

"So woe to those who pray, but are unmindful of their Prayer. They like to be seen of men" (107:5-7).

"Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret, surely He loves not the transgressors." (7:56).

Also:

“And in a part of the night, perform the Tahajjud (prayer) with it (the Quran) as a supererogatory prayer for you it may be that your Lord will raise you to a high station.” (17:80).

The third verse encourages Muslims to wake up during the night and pray whilst everyone else sleeps, thus having that privacy with God and not being seen by others. It is narrated in the hadith:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

Our Lord, the Blessed and the Exalted, descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the latter part of the night is left, and says: Who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Who asks Me so that I may give to him? Who asks Me forgiveness so that I may forgive him? (Sahih Muslim, Book 4, Number 1656, made available on www.sunnah.com).

However, just like the giving of charity, the saying of prayers is encouraged privately, but also in congregation, again, to encourage others to pray and also to form a bond of brotherhood.

[493] Matthew has Jesus continue his long discourse: This is now the second time Jesus is warning his audience not to imitate the **Gentiles**; the first was in 5:47. This time, the Gentiles are criticised for not praying properly; they repeat the same phrases over and over again, in the hope that the many repetitions will make their god(s) hear them. Much like in 5:47 above, this verse causes a significant challenge to those Christians who believe that Jesus would accept Gentiles to enter his community without them converting to Judaism. How could Gentiles remain as such and join the Jesus Community while Jesus himself warned his disciples not to imitate them?

There is little doubt that Jesus, like the Petrine Church would have only accepted Jews, and if a Gentile wished to join the community, they would have had to convert and thus no longer be a Gentile. See Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more details on the two types of Churches that existed in early Christianity.

[494] Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God; see under [Matthew 3:2](#) for details on the kingdom.

[495] This part of the prayer is about obedience to God's will.

[496] Here the prayer shifts from God to Jesus and the disciples. **Daily bread** would most likely mean the bread or sustenance for tomorrow. Such an interpretation is backed up by Jerome, who comments on the Gospel of the Hebrews: “For daily bread, I found (there the Hebrew word) *mahar*, which signifies ‘of tomorrow’. Hence the meaning is: ‘Give us today our bread of tomorrow’, that is to say, our future bread” (Commentary on Matthew 6:11).

[497] **Textual Variant**

The original prayer ends with this verse as reported by the earliest manuscripts such as the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and many others. However, later Christian scribes have made numerous additions to the prayer, there are in fact up to five different additions. The KJV and WEB add: *For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.*

Amen. I have omitted it as it is a clear addition made by a later scribe.

Commentary

This verse marks the end of the Lord's Prayer; the prayer itself is generally considered to have come from Jesus, but whether the version in Matthew is what Jesus actually thought is debated by many scholars. The prayer above is very similar to the Jewish Aramaic Kaddish prayer, which was often spoken at the end of the preaching section of the Synagogue worship service. It reads as follows:

"Magnified and sanctified
May His great name be in the world that he created, as He wills,
And may His kingdom come in your life and in your days
And in the lives of all the house of Israel, swiftly and soon."

Both prayers begin with God's praise and are followed by the prayer of the Kingdom of God to come, but Jesus' one expands on the Kaddish prayer, bringing the prayer to personal levels in asking for forgiveness and guidance. The prayer follows the format of the first chapter of the Holy Quran, which also begins with praise of God and then personal guidance.

[498] A similar instruction is given in the Holy Quran: "...Let them forgive and forbear, would you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Most forgiving and Merciful." (24:23).

[499] Very similar to his earlier teachings, Jesus wishes his disciples to serve God *only* for His sake and preferably in secret. To make known how pious you are to the general public may encourage people to boast, therefore their intentions of doing such good deeds are not for God but for alternative reasons.

The text also advocates the practice of **fasting** among the earlier followers of Jesus, and it is interesting to note that Matthew is the only gospel which contains such an instruction to fast, whilst the other three (Pauline) gospels do not. This is most likely due to the fact that they were influenced by Paul, who abrogated the Torah Law and thus found little purpose in fasting. But Jesus instructs his disciples to do so, and he himself practised it (Matthew 4:2).

In Islam, fasting is considered to be one of the most important acts of worship a Muslim can perform. It is one of the five pillars of Islam; to fast during the Holy month of Ramadan. Its physical and spiritual benefits are immense:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous....And that you fast is good for you if only you knew." (Holy Quran 2:184-5).

[500] The emphasis here is that people should do good deeds which they will store up in **Heaven**, which will not diminish or be in danger, unlike the treasures people hoard on **earth** which are prone to degenerate or be stolen. Furthermore, that which is hoarded and worked for, the heart of the person is normally focused on it and the person will devote much time to it. Thus one should work on things which will bring them closer to God; which will remind them of God and draw them nearer to Him, focusing their hearts on God as supposed to temporary worldly things.

It has often been stated by some Christians that the reward and punishment system in Islam is lower or inferior to Christianity. The latter's focus being on belief and not necessary works, for it is *belief* that will make one *right* with God, or make one *OK* with God. You have to believe that Jesus is divine and that he died for our sins. This is what leads to heavenly reward.

However, Jesus' saying above is more Islamic in that he is stressing good deeds and works; that people should perform good actions and works for the sake of God and in return they will be rewarded by God in the hereafter. Thus like in Islam, Jesus (and his brother James for that matter; James 2:14-17) taught belief in God *and* good works; both of these are to be done by followers to attain salvation.

[501] The above saying speaks of the **sound eye** and the **evil eye**, which in ancient Judaism often signified the *good way* and the *evil way*. Jesus is not referring to the physical eye, but rather to the spiritual eye, if it is good and sound, i.e. the person is spiritually well and is able to identify the truth well, then their soul is well and filled with light. On the other hand, those who are spiritually blind are full of darkness.

[502] Important Words

κύριος (*kurios*) – Noun, dative plural, masculine of κύριος (*kurios*) meaning: *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house. Also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from 14 years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The word (much like in English) is also applied to God. Many Christians will make the mistake to assume that all references of *lord* immediately refer to God and thus when Jesus is called *lord*, he is now synonymous with God, but as explained in the meaning of the word, this is clearly not the case. Jesus himself uses the word when speaking about the master of a house (Matt 24:45). Furthermore in the Genesis Apocryphon, found in the Dead Sea caves, Noah's father Lamech, is addressed by his wife: 'Oh my brother, Oh my Lord!' (1QapGen 2:9).

[503] The saying is quite self-explanatory. No one can wholly serve two masters or lords, in the same way, no man can wholly serve God and **mammon**, the latter meaning *property or money* or general *earthly goods*. Jesus wishes to further separate God and riches.

[504] The saying is about having complete and utter trust in God; not to be anxious about the next day, nor about food or water. However, this text has been the object of harsh criticism by numerous authors and writers; it is said that every 'starving sparrow' contradicts the saying (J. Weiss, 293), and there are also famines and wars which again go against the teaching above. Not only that, but the divine dream of Joseph to store food for seven years in preparation for the years of famine also shows that such a teaching has its weakness *if* taken literally.

Therefore, if the above saying is authentic, it must be against those people who were excessively anxious, who continually worry about food and drink and what to wear. The teaching is also echoed in later Jewish works: Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar states something very similar: 'Have you even seen a wild animal or a bird practising a craft? Yet they are provided for without any effort on their part although they were created only to serve me. But I was created to serve my Maker. How much more might not I be provided for without any effort on my part?' (Talmud, mKid 4:14).

[505] This is now the third time in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus criticises the **Gentiles**: the first being 5:47; the second in 6:7; and now the above.

[506] The whole passage is about trust, trust in God. It should not be taken literally as it would only encourage laziness, but Jesus is most likely warning against excessive attachment to the world. People should care more for the next life than they should for this life. It is likely that Jesus preached such a message to his disciples and others to encourage them to join his community and increase their spirituality. Trust in God is essential in the path to spiritual enlightenment; such a message is also given in the Holy

Quran: "Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?" (Holy Quran, 39:37). Such is the message of Islam, where even Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) had the verse engraved on a ring after receiving it as revelation following the death of his father.

[507] Verse 2 is primarily to do with judgement; the **measure** one gives will be the measure they get; in other words, whatever good deeds one does, they will be rewarded accordingly. In fact, it is also present in the Gospel of Mark (**Mark 4:24-25**), but the setting and context is different; in Mark Jesus is beside the sea preaching whilst in Matthew he is by a mountain (Matthew 5:1).

In Matthew, the saying is further expanded to judgement. He addresses the hypocrites, who are very quick to judge others yet find no fault with themselves. But quite the opposite is the case. The parable is also present in the Talmud: "'Take the chip out of your eye!' and the other states; 'Take the log out of yours!'" (bArakh 16b; 6BB 15b). The metaphor is strong; whilst it is possible to have a speck in one's eye it is impossible and unimaginable to have an entire log in an eye. Someone with a log in their eye is completely blind, and thus cannot judge the person with the spec in their brother's eye at all.

[508] Important Words

The famous Jewish Scholar Geza Vermes argues that the Aramaic of **holy** can either be read as qedasha (*ring*) or qudsha (*holy thing*). Thus when translating the saying, Matthew may have picked up on the wrong alternative and thus translated it as *holy thing* instead of *ring*. Thus spoiling the parallel of not giving *rings and pearls to dogs and pigs* (*The Authentic Gospels of Jesus*, 2003, p.109).

[509] **Dogs** were often despised in Jewish literature and were often seen as unclean animals; in the Dead Sea Scrolls, they were not permitted in the *area of the sanctuary* because they *eat the bones of the sanctuary when the flesh is still on them* (4QMMT 394). Thus the **what is holy** in the saying probably refers to sacrificed meat, i.e. don't give that to dogs. But the second part of the saying makes little sense if taken literally, as Jews never kept pigs.

It is more likely that both the **dogs** and the **pigs** represented something and should be interpreted allegorically. In the New Testament (Mark 7:27, Matt 15:26) and in Rabbinic literature, dogs symbolised Gentiles (Midrash on Psalms 4:11). It has also been argued that both terms (dogs and swine) were used as derogatory terms for the Gentiles (Samuel Tobias Lachs, *Studies in the Semitic Background to the Gospel of Matthew*, 1977, p.209).

Pearls are often interpreted as successful interpretations of the Torah, or they symbolised the Kingdom of God (Matt 13:45). With that in mind, the interpretation is a warning; *Jesus is warning his disciples not to proclaim and invite Gentiles to the Kingdom*, in case they trample underfoot the message and attack them. And interestingly this is exactly what happened after Jesus' departure when Paul entered into the Church. He preached and set up pure Gentile Churches where the message of Jesus was ignored (Paul rarely quotes the historical Jesus) and the Churches began focusing on baseless theologies such as the death and atonement of Jesus. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that neither Mark nor Luke contain the above saying; this is most likely due to the fact that both were Gentiles and chose to omit such a saying from their gospels.

[510] This passage is relatively self-explanatory. Jesus equates God to a Father, that when a child asks for something, would the father give him something else, which is harmful? In the same way, God will answer the prayers of His servants and give to them what they want, within reason that is. Strong faith in prayer is attested in Islam also:

“And your Lord says; ‘Pray unto me, I will respond to you, verily those who are arrogant towards My worship, they will enter Hell, humiliated.’” (Holy Quran, 40:61).

[511] This verse is an utterance of The Golden Rule, which is a principle common in numerous faiths and highlights the ideal attitude one should have with one's brothers. The earliest version in Jewish scripture of the Golden Rule is in the Book of Tobit: “And what you hate, do not do to anyone” (4:15). The only difference being Tobit is in the negative and Jesus' saying is in the positive. But the essence is the same. The same idea is portrayed in the writings of Philo (born 25 BCE): “Moreover, it is ordained in the laws themselves that no one shall do to his neighbour what he would be unwilling to have done to himself” (Hypothetica 7:6). The saying is also echoed by the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): It is narrated on the authority of Anas b. Malik that the Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) observed: “None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his brother” - or he said “for his neighbour” - “that which he loves for himself.” (Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Number 72, made available on www.sunnah.com).

The second part of the saying, about the Law and the Prophets is a reference to the entire Old Testament; the Law being the Torah and the Prophets the remaining books.

[512] The above saying contains a dire warning, that the pathway to Paradise is **narrow** and difficult, while the pathway to hell and ruin is **wide** and easy to tread. The concept is not alien and unique to Jesus; the fourth book of Ezra (written just after the gospels) mentions something relatively similar:

“Another example: There is a city built and set on a plain, and it is full of good things; but the entrance to it is narrow and set in a precipitous place, so that there is fire on the right side and deep water on the left, and there is only one path lying between them, that is, between the fire and water, so that only one man may walk upon the path.” (James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Vol. 1*, 2010, 7:6-8).

Here the teaching is the same, that the path, or city in this case, which represents Heaven is vast and beautiful, but has a difficult and almost secret entrance.

[513] Matthew has Jesus continue his long discourse; in this account, Jesus warns against false Prophets; the warning is only present in Matthew's Gospel, which may indicate that his own community may have had issues with men claiming to be prophets (Matt 10:41).

This verse has been used by numerous Christians to attack the founder of Islam; the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he was (God forbid) foretold by Jesus as a false prophet. Although Jesus does warn about the coming of false prophets, it does not indicate that *all* prophets to come after Jesus are false. He himself taught that his message was incomplete and that another would come after him; see John 14 and 16 ([The Promise of the Paraclete](#)).

In fact, numerous prophets have warned their communities of false prophets to come after them; Moses even gave a test of Prophethood to his community in Deut 18:20. The Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also foretold the coming of false prophets after him, and one should be careful of them: “Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, ‘...And the Hour will not be established till there appear about thirty liars, all of whom will be claiming to be the messengers of Allah’” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 56, Number 806, made available on www.sunnah.com). Therefore, this warning is not new and unique to Jesus; many Prophets said the same thing.

[514] The test laid out by Jesus is that by the prophet's fruits you will know them. The metaphor of fruit signifies *deeds* (Isa 3:10; Jer 17:10), thus it is through the actions of the prophets that people are able to determine whether they are true or false. That every good tree produces good fruit, i.e. every good person produces good deeds, and likewise every evil person produces evil deeds, and the latter will be thrown into the fire. It may be worth mentioning that Jesus is talking about *deeds* and *works*; that people will be judged by their *deeds*, which is very much in line with the Petrine Church and is exactly what is argued by their leader James (James 2: 14-26). Such ideology goes completely

against Paul who argued that what saves you is faith alone and not works (Ephesians 2: 8-10).

[515] It is often the disciples who refer to Jesus as **lord**, and thus Jesus is stating that simply by saying **lord**, you will not enter Heaven. This passage presents a teaching that runs completely counter to the later theology of Paul, which emphasised faith (not works) lead to salvation. Matthew is quoting Jesus saying that it is not just by saying *Lord Lord*, i.e. by just having faith that you will be saved, but by good deeds and works.

[516] This parable ends the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. Anyone who listens carefully to Jesus' teachings is likened to a wise and intelligent man who builds a house on strong foundations and when faced with harsh weather is able to withstand it. Therefore, a person who takes and listens to Jesus' teaching forms a strong foundation and when tested or persecuted by enemies, he is able to withstand the onslaught. Unlike the **foolish man** who builds on sand, who does not listen to Jesus and when faced with persecution he caves in and falls.

[517] The **scribes** were teachers of the Law. Jesus taught in a different way and system; being a prophet and being taught and guided by God, Jesus' teaching would have stood out amongst other men. This is attested in the Holy Quran as well, where God states:

"And HE (God) will teach him (Jesus) the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel;" (3:49)

The above saying of Jesus was copied from the Gospel of Mark (1:21-22) by our author Matthew. However, the setting is different in both gospels. In Mark's the crowds marvel at Jesus while he was teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum, but in Matthew the above happens while he taught beside a mountain in Capernaum (Matt 5). Perhaps the synagogue was on a mountain or hill?

The other subtle change Matthew makes is that Jesus teaches like one having authority and not like **their** scribes, again displaying the clear *us* and *them* attitude. This could have been due to the Jewish authorities who had disowned and basically removed the Matthean Community from Judaism by the time this gospel was written.

[518] Important Words

προσκυνέει (*proskuney*) – Verb, imperfect, active, indicative, 3rd singular of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*) meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the word as *worshipped*, which cannot be the case since the leper was a Jew, as verse 4 below indicates, who would never worship another man. I have agreed with the RSV in their translation.

[519] After the man is healed, Jesus instructs him not to tell anyone and then tells him to get out and to present himself to the Temple **priest**, and to make an offering for his **cleansing** as laid out in Leviticus 14. However, when reading the verses of Chapter 14 in Leviticus, it is highly unlikely that Jesus would have followed them. The passage speaks of the cleansed leper taking two birds, killing one and dipping the other in the blood of the dead one and sprinkling the blood over the healed leper. Once this was done, the priest would then announce that the leper was clean. Such awkward and rather unhygienic practices cannot be from God, and must have been practices (much like the sacrificial animals) which the Jews borrowed from their neighbouring pagans, see notes under Mark 11:15 for more details about sacrifices and how it was not of divine origin.

If Jesus did command the healed leper to go to the Temple, it would have been to get the approval from the priest and not go through such primitive and bloody practices.

[520] Important Words

παῖς (*pais*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *child; either boy or girl; son or daughter; can also mean servant or attendant* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

We can't be certain whether the child was the *servant* or *child* of the centurion, since the Greek could be either. The WEB states *servant*, however I prefer *son*, since if Matthew did mean servant or slave, he would have used the word δούλος (*doulos*) which he uses in verse 9 for servant . He also uses the word παῖς (*pais*) for child in 2:16, and in a related story in 17:15.

[521] Whilst in **Capernaum**, Jesus' fame spreads to the point where even a **centurion**, a Gentile, comes to him asking if he is able to heal his servant/son. The centurion seems to have great faith, enough to make Jesus marvel and proclaim a prophecy regarding the **sons of the kingdom** (υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας). The phrase is used in just one other instance in Matthew's Gospel; in 13:38, where the phrase refers to the good seeds which were sown by the sower. It is the antithesis (opposite) of *sons of the evil one*, and thus refers to the righteous people who have accepted Jesus. The phrase is not used elsewhere in any of the gospels, nor in the New Testament, it is even absent from the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), therefore making it quite difficult to determine its exact meaning.

[522] This passage has been utilised by numerous Christians to argue that Jesus' mission was extended not just to Jews, but also to non-Jews (Gentiles): that his mission was global, against what is mentioned in the Holy Quran: "*I will send Jesus as a Messenger to the Children of Israel...*" (3:50).

However, delving a little deeper into the passage shows the exact opposite. The passage begins with Jesus entering Capernaum and being met by a commander of the Roman army, most likely a Gentile, who begs Jesus to heal his servant/son. This is the first time Jesus is asked to perform a healing on a Gentile, and he readily accepts, willing to go into the house of the centurion to heal him. However, the centurion does not think he is worthy of Jesus' visit but expresses his faith by believing that by simply uttering a word, his servant/son would be healed. The answer astonishes Jesus (most likely due to his low expectations of faith from Gentiles compared to his own people), who turns to the crowd following him and tells them that in all of Israel, none has he found who has as much faith as this Gentile, i.e. faith in the power and authority of Jesus.

Up to this point, there is nothing particularly striking about the passage. A Gentile expresses faith in Jesus' *ability to heal his servant/son*, and Jesus complies, surprised at the same time at the faith of the Gentile. This story does not show Jesus preaching to Gentiles. Nor does the Gentile become a faithful disciple of Jesus. Nor does he even follow Jesus. The text shows no indication that he does; on the contrary the centurion only expresses faith in Jesus' *ability to heal*. There is no indication of a Gentile mission at all. What can be seen at best is the acceptance of the Gentile's one request, and the faith expressed by the Gentile in Jesus' *healing* ability only.

However, the problem arises in the prediction of the entering of Gentiles in verses 11 and 12. Does this indicate that Jesus has come to preach to the Gentiles as well? Whilst it is possible that Matthew had Jesus prophesy the entry of the Gentiles from the east and the west, it seems rather strange that Matthew would have him prophesy in the same sentence the removal of the sons of the Kingdom, interpreted to be the natural heirs of the Kingdom. Matthew, being a Jew himself, would have considered himself and his community to be part of this group.

Therefore, the saying most likely means that many of the Jews would be thrown out of the Kingdom; these would be the Jews who rejected Jesus. While many **from the east and west** enter instead, this may include some Gentiles, but probably those Jews who lived outside Judea, particularly in the East in India, where the lost ten tribes of Israel lived. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) has spoken about these tribes and how Jesus travelled to Kashmir through Afghanistan, the entire purpose being to preach to these lost tribes of Israel (*Jesus in India*, 1908, Chapter 4).

The other alternative is that Jesus was referring to the Muslims who were to come hundreds of years after him; that the Kingdom of God would be taken away from the

Palestinian Jews and given to the Arabs in the form of Islam which was a message for all mankind.

[523] Important Words

βεβλημένην (*beblaymenayn*) – Verb, present active participle, accusative singular, feminine of βαλλω (*ballō*) meaning: *throw; cast; fall or lay down* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Again, the choice of words illustrates a link between the fever and demon-possession, where the latter would often cast down its victims (Mark 9:20).

[524]

Jesus next visit Simon's (Peter) house where his mother-in-law is ill. Again, the narrative is quite similar to a typical exorcism account; in that Jesus enters a place, he is confronted with an ill person, and the fever **leaves** the mother-in-law (much like the demon leaves a person). She is healed and then to illustrate that the healing is complete, she gets up and serves Jesus.

Unrelated, but it is worth noting that from this account we can assume that Simon was married. This is interesting and has been brought up by numerous scholars in the past: the fact that a married man was called by Jesus, and after becoming his disciple still maintained his property and family goes against the Roman Catholic tradition where bishops and priests are not permitted to marry. The scholar Schnackenburg wrote about this in detail and still awaits an answer (Schnackenburg, marginal note: *Why do Protestant theologians speak so little about the unmarried Paul?*).

The above account is recorded in the Gospel of Mark (**1:29-31**), from which our author Matthew copied from. However, the context in Matthew's account is different from that of Mark's. The question is, *when* did Jesus heal Peter's mother-in-law? Was it very early in his ministry, just after calling the disciples? (Mark) Or much later after he goes on preaching tours? (Matthew). Unfortunately, it is impossible to know.

[525] Matthew continues with the same narrative; he adds however that Jesus casts out the demons with a **word** or command. This in turn fulfils *another* Old Testament prophecy according to Matthew, this time from Isaiah 53:4 : "Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted."

The Isaiah text is part of the four Servant Songs of Isaiah (often referred to as the *Suffering Servant* songs) and is often quoted by many Christians to prove that Jesus is prophesied in the Old Testament and that he came to bear the sins of mankind. If you were to ask a Christian to give you a prophecy of Jesus in the Old Testament, chances are, you will hear this one.

However, in the above context; where Jesus is simply casting out demons and healing people, no mention is made of him bearing their sins, or atoning for their sins. Thus, it is quite difficult to see how exactly Jesus does fulfil this 'prophecy' according to Matthew.

Having said that, it may be worth providing a few possible interpretations of this oft-repeated 'prophecy' concerning Jesus in the Old Testament. The Servant Songs are four in total: Chapter 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12 of Isaiah.

Most, if not all Christians are in agreement that the *Servant* identified in the above songs in Isaiah is Jesus; that they are prophecies foretelling the coming of the Messiah, his suffering, death and atonement of the sins of mankind (for more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#)). Yet, according to the majority of the Jews and academic scholars, the songs have *nothing at all* to do with Jesus or the Messiah, and that the Servant is Israel, i.e. the Jews themselves, or a section of the Jewish

people. Some scholars, such as Klaus Baltzer argue that it is Moses (Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero Isaiah*, 2001), but his view is not common. It is worth noting that many Christians who argue that the Suffering Servant is Jesus are only aware of the last song, that being Isaiah 53. However, for a complete interpretation, particularly in identifying this figure, all four songs must be analysed.

The following analysis is technical and complex: I recommend only those who are aware of the Isaiah 53 and the Suffering Servant songs to read ahead, otherwise, most of it will be of little interest. The Jewish and academic point of view will be presented, it's the strongest interpretation, fitting the overall context and picture of the songs. To begin with, Israel is called Yahweh's *servant* numerous times in the book of Isaiah: 41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20. This itself lends strong support that the servant in the four songs above is Israel. But it may be worthwhile analysing each of the four songs:

Isa 42

1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations.
2. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;
3. a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.
4. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

The first verse introduces the Servant, the *chosen one*, who will bring forth justice to the nations. The Hebrew reads as above, but the Greek Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) actually names the servant as *Jacob*. This is not surprising, since even in the Hebrew text, in Chapter 41:8-13 it speaks of Jacob-Israel as God's servant, whom God has *chosen*. This servant will bring forth justice in the earth and the coastlands will wait for his law (verse 3 and 4). He will do so without breaking or crushing a reed (verse 3); the only other instances in the Old Testament which speak of a bruised/broken reed is in Isa 36:6 and 2 Kings 18:21, both of which refer to Egypt and Israel's reliance on Egypt. Thus verse 3 seems to be saying (in a rather roundabout way) that Israel will not rely on Egypt when establishing justice on the earth.

The Servant above does not match the life of Jesus in any way, since firstly he is named as *Jacob*; furthermore, Jesus does not bring any justice to the earth or any law for that matter. It may be argued that Jesus may bring about justice in his second coming; however, a level of constancy must be maintained, since traditional Christian interpretations of the last song (Isaiah 53) are not linked to Jesus' second coming, but to his earthly life. Thus the above song must also be linked to his earthly life.

The second Servant Song reads as follows:

Isa 49

1. Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.
2. He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.
3. And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
4. But I said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God."
5. And now the LORD says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honoured in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength –
6. he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Verse 1 begins and is linked to verse 4 of the first song, where the coastlands await for the Servant's law. Here again, in verse 3 the servant is referred to as *Israel*, who is glorified, much like in 42:1. But, the problem lies in verse 5 where the servant of Israel is made distinct to Jacob/Israel. This has led interpreters to argue that the Servant in the above song is not Israel in general, but rather an elect group *within* Israel chosen to bring the remaining tribes back. This elect group is the real Israel; these people are the ones worthy of the name as verse 3 points out.

In turn, this group will become the light to the nations/Gentiles. The latter will witness their struggle and recognise that they are the true people of God, thus linking this song very closely to the fourth song below. The descriptions of the Servant in the above song are very generic; in that Jesus could be said to be the Servant above, but likewise so could any other righteous Jew, since there is nothing particular in Jesus' life which allows someone to claim that *only* Jesus can be the Servant above.

The third Servant Song:

Isa 50

4. The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.
5. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward.
6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
7. For the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been confounded; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
8. He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.
9. Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

The Servant above appears to be taught by God. In 49:2, his mouth is likened to a sharp sword. Thus the particular group of Jews seems to form some kind of guild, to guide the people and bring them back to God. (50:10). The Servant is protected by God (verse 7 and 8), and those contending with the Servant are in fact contending with God; this does not mean that the Servant is God; rather that God is protecting the Servant and will vindicate him.

Thus, the first three songs speak of the servant as a group from among Israel whose mission it was to bring about justice and to guide them back to Yahweh; they are glorified by God and are His chosen ones.

Lastly, the fourth and final Servant Song:

Isa 52

13. Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

14. As many were astonished at him -- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men --
15. so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

Isa.53

1. Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2. For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.
3. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
4. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.
6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.
8. By oppression and judgement he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?
9. And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.
10. Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand;
11. he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.
12. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The final song is the one often utilised by Christians to argue that the Servant is Jesus. The Servant above suffers terribly: his appearance is so marred that it is beyond recognition (52:14); he is despised and rejected (53:3); wounded and bruised (53:5) etc. Within the context of Isaiah, this should cause little surprise, since the Jewish people are described as such throughout the latter parts of the book. In the following chapter (Isa 54) Jerusalem, personified as a barren woman, is described as being *afflicted*, *storm-tossed* and *not comforted* (verse 11). Meanwhile earlier, Jerusalem is spoken of as being a *captive* (52:1), having suffered from *devastation*, *destruction*, *famine* and the *sword* (51:19) and *robbed* and *plundered* (42:21). Throughout the latter chapters surrounding the Servant Songs, Jerusalem and the Jews are described in such manner; see 41:11; 49:7, 13; 51:7, 23; 52:5. This all goes perfectly in line with the descriptions of the suffering Servant in the fourth song.

The fourth song differs dramatically from the others due to the fact that it was in response to the exile; when the Babylonian king had invaded Jerusalem and exiled the majority of its population back to Babylon. This song is an answer to the exile. If Yahweh loved Israel so much, why would He let them suffer? Why does He permit His Servant

to be punished, rejected, cast aside and murdered? All these things happened with the permission of God, but it did not happen without any reason or purpose/

Verses 52:13-15 speak of Yahweh's intention to glorify His servant in the sight of the nations. The Gentiles had marvelled earlier at Israel's suffering, but in the coming days they would witness the glory of Israel beyond anything they had dreamed. Verses 1-3 of Chapter 53 speak of the nations in wonder at the incredible sight of the servant. No one will believe them when they tell the tale of these people, for their past records bear no hint of the glory they are to receive and that they were a persecuted and afflicted people with no power or influence.

Verses 4-6 speak of the nations' regret; they failed to recognise the significance of Israel's sufferings while they were in power, but now that the sufferings of Israel are over and they are enjoying their glorification from God, the nations wake up and recognise the fact that they themselves have been the sinners, whilst Israel suffered on their behalf. Verses 7-9 follow on from the previous ones; the nations continue their repentant confessions and highlight the innocence and wonder at the submissive spirit of Israel in suffering due to their (the nations) own sins. These verses are the answers to the sufferings of Israel. Their sufferings have in fact saved the world from the punishment they so deserved. The nations see the sufferings and innocence of Israel and will finally have their eyes opened to the significance of Israel. They will realise that Israel suffered on their behalf and in return will feel deep sympathy and regret, and repent of their sins. Thus the sufferings of Israel have not gone in vain, but have brought about the changing of heart of all the nations. The final verses speak of the glorification of Israel; Israel will live on, see its offspring live on and be made to prosper. (Note the fact that the *Servant will see his offspring*, proving without doubt that it cannot be referring to Jesus, as he, according to our Christian friends was childless).

The historical context of the Isaiah songs fits the above well. To argue that the songs were about the future Messiah, about the son of God coming to sacrifice himself for the sins of mankind is illogical. The fact that the servant is named numerous times as *Israel*, and that the first three songs bear no resemblance to Jesus' life shows that they were not prophecies but simply songs written by the author to encourage his audience and to give them hope in such distressful days.

[526] Before departing to another town or village to preach, Jesus is confronted by a **scribe** who wishes to follow him, i.e. become one of his disciples. Perhaps seeing the nature of the scribe, Jesus responds with a warning; that those who do follow him are homeless and devote their entire time to preaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. This seems to have done the trick since the scribe disappears from the scene; perhaps the warning scared him off. However, this is unlikely to be historically accurate, due to it being very impractical, and would result in the followers of Jesus begging for food and shelter. Earlier, Matthew records that Jesus spent some time and dwelt in Capernaum (4:13), most likely in the house of Peter.

Another possible interpretation of the above saying may be that it was a post-crucifixion saying. After surviving the cross ordeal, it is likely that he was continually on the move and therefore did not have one base like he had before being arrested. If anyone wished to follow him wherever he went, they too would have to live like him, being on the move constantly.

[527] One of Jesus' disciples asks Jesus for time to **bury his father** who had passed away. It is not clear why the man was wandering around with Jesus whilst he father's body still remained unburied. But if the above is assumed to be historically accurate, then the saying of Jesus points to urgency: let the spiritually dead bury the spiritually dead is the message of the saying. It may also be the case that the father was not a member of Jesus' community, and therefore the son was exempt from attending the funeral.

The famous scholar Geza Vermes provides an alternative interpretation. He argues that the father of the man was not *yet* dead, and the man wished to join Jesus after the death of his father. Such an answer would have provoked a harsh reply from Jesus. One senses the message of urgency throughout the gospels and Jesus had no time for lazy time wasters (*The Authentic Gospels of Jesus*, 2003, p.104).

[528] The above story is a copy of the Gospel of Mark, our author in fact copied it but makes a small change in the above verse. Whilst in Mark the disciples seem to question Jesus' concern, asking him if he does not care about them; this cry is toned down a great deal in Matthew with the latter writing the disciples simply cry out for help.

For a much more detailed description of Jesus stilling the storm, readers are recommended to check under [Mark 4:35-41](#).

[529] Matthew records the above story, which he copied from the Gospel of Mark 5:1-20. As can be seen, the Gospel of Mark goes into far more detail, and for a fuller picture of what happened, readers are recommended to check Mark. For a detailed discussion of the phrase **son of God**, see notes under [Mark 3:11](#).

Matthew though, disagreed with his source (the Gospel of Mark); he makes a few alterations or corrections which he felt necessary, e.g. instead of one demonic as recorded in the Gospel of Mark, Matthew has two. Matthew also cuts out much of the dialogue between Jesus and the demon Legion which Mark narrates; the latter's questioning of the demon's name is omitted, most likely not to give the impression that Jesus was ignorant of something. The ending is different as well; the townspeople (Gentiles) come out and ask Jesus to leave their territory, since he was not welcome, probably due to Jesus destroying their livelihood! Who knows what else he might do to them!

[530] The above story was originally recorded in the Gospel of Mark (5:1-12), and our author Matthew copied from it. For a detailed discussion on the account, read the notes under [Mark 5:1-12](#). Matthew does make some interesting changes to the text of Mark though, which will leave the attentive reader rather baffled: Did the above story happen indoors in a house? (Mark) or was it out in the open? (Matthew); was the cripple lowered through the roof? (Mark), or simply brought to Jesus? (Matthew); and *when* did it all happen? Quite early in Jesus' ministry? (Mark) or much later? (Matthew).

The two versions of the story cannot be reconciled; one is correct and the other is not, unless we admit it happened twice, which some Christians do argue. Matthew's version may be preferred for the simple reason that it is less extraordinary. Had the event happened as Mark portrays it, there would be no purpose in Matthew modifying it to make it simpler.

Thus again, the above is an example where it can be seen that the authors were simply ordinary men, writing their own gospel accounts, and not being inspired by God, since they write accounts contradicting each other. The two writers simply had access to different traditions which they either read themselves or heard.

[531] Matthew continues the narrative just like his source, the Gospel of Mark, this time copying from [Mark 2:13-17](#). The account is very similar, with one exception being the name of the tax collector which is changed to **Matthew** rather than Mark's *Levi*. This begs the question; what was the man's name? Matthew or Levi?

Some Christians have often argued that both versions are correct; that the tax collector's Greek name was Matthew and his Hebrew name was Levi. But that's not possible, since both names are Aramaic in origin; Levi being the third son of prophet Jacob, and Matthew going back to Mattithiah in 2 Kings 24:17 and Nehemiah 8:4. It seems that Matthew intentionally changed the name from Levi, to bring it in line with the list of the twelve disciples in Matthew 10:1-16, which was important to him.

The other modification to the text is the insertion (verse 13) of Hosea 6:6: "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings." The insertion is awkward, since the topic of sacrifices has not been spoken of at all. However, the quotation is important for Matthew, as he repeats it later in 12:7. He wishes to stress the importance of mercy and compassion compared to sacrifice, which may have been an obstacle for many of the sinners and tax-collectors. Jesus' opinion is not unique on this matter, even some scribes agreed with him on this; see [Mark 12:33](#).

[532] The above story was originally from the Gospel of Mark (2:18-22), whom Matthew copied. See notes under Mark for a detailed explanation. Our author Matthew does, however, make some interesting modifications: The first major one is that the **wedding guests** are not able to **mourn** instead of *fast* which the author Mark states. The saying makes little sense in Matthew, the question is about **fasting**, and makes no reference to **mourning**. The original saying, recorded by both Mark and Luke is more likely correct, while Matthew's change isn't.

[533]

The rest of the story is almost exactly the same as Mark 2:18-22. For a detailed discussion on Jesus being called the **bride-groom** and the discussion of **wineskins**, see notes under Mark.

[534] Important Words

προσεκύει (*prosekunei*) – Verb, imperfect active indicative, 3rd person singular of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*) meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates it as *worship*, that the man *worshipped* Jesus. But this is unlikely, since the man spoken above was a Jew, a ruler of the Synagogue (Mark 5:21), and no Jew would worship another man. Hence, the alternative which actually agrees with the RSV translation.

[535] The above story is originally from the Gospel of Mark (5:21-43), see notes under Mark for a detailed discussion. Matthew, however, condenses it a great deal, along with making some small but significant changes. The first being that this story is no longer a *healing* as in Mark, but Matthew changes it to a *resurrection*: In Mark, the father of the girl approaches Jesus to come and heal his daughter, but this is changed in Matthew to him approaching Jesus to resurrect his daughter. What did the ruler really ask Jesus? Probably to heal his daughter, since that is what Jesus is known for throughout this gospel.

[536]

The woman discussed here most was probably suffering from a haemorrhage or some other vaginal ailment.

[537]

The Gospel of Mark presents a bigger picture of what happened, with a whole dialogue between Jesus and the woman, see under Mark 5:21-43 for a fuller picture. In Matthew version of the story, the woman does not get very far, she simply thinks to touch his garment, but doesn't actually do it, rather Jesus **turns around** and declares that she is healed.

So did she touch his garment then? (Mark) or not? (Matthew). Did Jesus feel power go forth from him? (Mark) or not? (Matthew). We do not have any idea why Matthew omitted half the story, but in doing so, he created a rather boring and dull story.

[538] The healing of the little girl is also reduced by Matthew: In Mark, after the woman is healed, a message is sent to Jesus not to bother coming to heal the little girl, since she has died. Obviously Matthew had to omit this message, since he portrays the girl as dead from the very beginning of the story!

[539] After Jesus heals Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with a Haemorrhage (previous chapter), he moves on from there and is followed by **two blind men** who cry out to Jesus to be healed. The story is remarkably similar to the story where Jesus meets the single blind man and heals him in Mark 10:46-52. In both stories, Jesus is confronted by the blind, who cry out **Son of David! Have mercy on me/us!** Jesus then proceeds to heal them.

Either Matthew copied the story from Mark, but made significant changes, or Jesus encountered a blind man (Mark) who cried out to be healed, and then a little later two blind men cried out the exact same thing and so too got healed.

[540]

After the healing of the two blind men in the previous section, Jesus leaves the house where he is then confronted with a dumb man, i.e. a man who was unable to speak; whom the crowd thought was possessed by a demon.

[541]

It is not certain whether Matthew was using the text of Mark in the above incident, since Matthew actually creates a doublet; the above story is repeated again a few chapters later in Matthew 12. The latter doublet is closer to the text of Mark. Either way, perhaps due to jealousy, the Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons with the aid of the leader of demons; see [Mark 3:22](#) for a very similar accusation.

[542] In Matthew, Jesus does not seem to hear the accusation of the Pharisees that he is possessed by a demon, mentioned in the previous chapter. He simply continues with his mission in preaching to the Jews in the cities and villages. In Mark's Gospel ([3:22](#)) however, he replies to the unfounded accusation.

[543] Attentive readers might recognise the saying in verse 36, it resembles Mark 6:34, in fact it's the exact same saying. Jesus supposedly feels **compassion for crowds because they are like sheep with a shepherd** twice! Once just before feeding 5,000 ([Mark 6:32](#)) and again in the above setting in Matthew's Gospel.

In the above, Jesus sees the crowds running about, probably excited and at the same time confused resulting in him feeling pity for them, since they had no leader/shepherd. He therefore makes the observation that the harvest is great but the workers few; implying that there is much work to do with these people, but not many disciples to do it. The final verse has Jesus asking his disciples to pray to God to send more workers, i.e. increase their numbers so as to preach to all the people.

[544] The story of the **Commissioning of the Twelve** occurs in the Gospel of Mark as well, in Mark 6:7-11, but our author Matthew has expanded it a great deal. He adds a full list of the disciples at the beginning; see under [Mark 3:13-19](#) for details of each apostle mentioned in the list.

[545] Before sending the twelve out to preach and heal, Jesus tells them whom to avoid and whom to go to; this is one of the many passages in Matthew's Gospel which directly *limits the missionary activity* of Jesus (in this case, the disciples) to *only the Jews*. The **Gentiles** and even the **Samaritans** are *completely excluded*, showing therefore that Jesus only came for the Jewish people, and that Paul was incorrect in his understanding when he bestowed upon himself the role of Apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13) and began his Gentile Mission.

Christian preachers will often counter the above argument by quoting the end of the Gospel of Matthew ([28:19](#)) where Jesus commands his followers to preach to *all the nations*. A detailed explanation will be given in the notes under the verse, but what can be noted here is that the author Matthew himself probably understood Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah and that Jesus came only for the Jews. Moreover, when Paul's Gentile Churches were being set up all around the Roman empire, and when they were growing at a much faster rate than Matthew's Jewish Christian Churches, Matthew felt that in order to compete for converts, his Church had to open the doors to the Gentiles as well. However, the difference being that while Paul permitted Gentiles to enter his Church and remain as Gentiles, Matthew's Jewish Christians did not and only permitted them to enter their Church if they converted fully to Judaism and followed the Torah.

Therefore, Matthew would have added the final clause in Chapter 28:19; that the disciples were to preach to all the nations, whilst the above limit of the missionary activity

seems to be an authentic tradition of Jesus which Matthew had access to.

This is also the first time Matthew is using the phrase **lost sheep of Israel**; the phrase is only repeated in one other passage, that being in 15:24. However, the phrase is also found in Jeremiah 50:6, where it refers to the people of Israel as being lost and without a leader. The context is interesting; the *lost sheep* are attempting to make their way back to Zion. This could refer to the Jews scattered around the Diaspora (the Jews living in mainly Gentile lands outside Judea). If this is the case, Matthew's use of the phrase is important and shows that he wishes Jesus to command his disciples to enter Gentile lands, but to give the message to the Jews *only*.

[546] In Mark 6:9 Jesus commands the disciples not to *put on two coats*, which probably didn't make sense to our author Matthew, who subsequently corrected it to not take **two coats**. He also adds another phrase; he has Jesus tell his disciples that **the labourer is worthy of his food** which would imply that neither the disciples nor any missionary was to be paid for his services as a preacher, but rather would be paid in food and accommodation.

Jesus is a little stricter in Matthew as well; whilst in Mark Jesus says *take nothing except a staff* (Mark 7:8), Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew explicitly commands them **not** to take a **staff**. We aren't sure which is correct, Jesus couldn't have said both, so one of the gospel writers got it wrong.

[547] Matthew copies the text of Mark (Mark 6:11) about shaking the **dust off their feet**, but adds the significance of such an action. In essence it signifies the termination of all relationships with that town; that town has now lost its opportunity of salvation and is now outside the fold of Jesus' community and thus God's mercy. That town would now be in a worse state than the two cities of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah**. These two cities were destroyed by God in the Old Testament during the times of the prophet Lot. The primary reason given is the town's practice of homosexuality, which is seen as an abomination in God's eyes.

[548] The imagery of **sheep** is familiar in Jewish circles. The book of Enoch (1 Enoch 90) relates how some defenceless sheep are killed by ravens, dogs and kites. The sheep were the pious Jews. Jesus is using the same image to describe how his disciples may be treated in the hands of their enemies.

[549] See under Matt 24:14 for the interpretation of this verse.

[550] The predictions of what the disciples will go through again are doubtful. Many scholars hold the view that these words were placed in Jesus' mouth after the events had actually taken place. The predictions are 'too accurate', since this is exactly what happened after Jesus: many of his disciples were beaten and taken to the governors, even Paul is included, who was beaten and imprisoned many times (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

[551] Like numerous other passages in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus only commanded his followers to preach to the Jewish people during his lifetime. This passage is no exception, as the first part speaks of the disciples preaching and being persecuted in the **towns of Israel**.

The second part is problematic; Jesus prophesies his second coming **before** the disciples are able to preach to all of Israel. Yet the vast majority of Christians around the world are still awaiting his second coming even to this day. The problem does not seem to have been identified as such by early Christians who paid little attention to the second part of the verse. It is likely the saying is correct and authentic, as Matthew would not have created a prophecy which did not come true. Jesus most likely said so, and wished to return to his followers sometime in the near future but was unable to fulfil his wish. See Mark 13:28-32 for more details.

[552] In Matthew 9:34 Jesus is accused of casting out demons with the power of the leader of the demons. But Jesus does not address the accusation and seems to simply walk off. From the above it seems that he did hear the accusation but chose not to argue back, which is odd since later in Matthew 12:24 Jesus is accused again but this time he does argue back. It is possible that one of his disciples informed him of the accusation, but either way, Jesus is called **Beelzebul** (See [Mark 3:22](#) for details on Beelzebul), and as such his followers must in the same way be prepared to receive similar insults and abuse.

[553] Jesus is teaching his disciples about reliance on God; the disciples are not to **fear** people who can only destroy the body, but rather they should fear God, who is able to destroy both the body and the soul. After telling them to fear God, Jesus then gives them hope; God takes care of **sparrows**, and they, the disciples are worth far more than sparrows and therefore God will in turn take care of them as well.

[554] Those who believe in Jesus and acknowledge that he is the Messiah, to these Jesus too will acknowledge in the hereafter and he will testify to them. The Holy Quran also attests to this:

“And how *will it be* when We bring from each community a witness and we bring you (Muhammad) as a witness against these people.” (4:42).

“Every Prophet will bear witness on the Day of Judgement against or concerning those to whom he was sent as a Messenger. The word *these* includes both believers and disbelievers, the nature of evidence being different in different cases.” (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.522)

[555] Jesus is talking about division rather than bringing war. He did not come to bring about reconciliation among the people, but rather division. Every prophet naturally creates divisions when he preaches to a community, as a man may turn to that prophet's teachings against the wishes of his family and thus create division in the household and community.

[556] As the message of Jesus began to spread and people accepted it, it would be natural that issues and problems may arise within families where certain members would have converted and others not. In such circumstances, Jesus teaches that the people should love him **more** than their parents and family members, thus they should not lose faith or fall under the pressure of family members. Jesus does not demand that his followers love him personally more, it is the faith and God that they should love. Jesus is a mere messenger, a representative of God. Such a teaching is common amongst the Prophets of God. The Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said a similar statement: “Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, ‘By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father and his children.’” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 14, made available on [www.sunnah.com](#)).

[557] Verses 38 and 39 are in fact from the Gospel of Mark, our author Matthew copied from [Mark 8:34-35](#). Those wishing to follow Jesus are to deny themselves; meaning that the person must refuse to recognise or must ignore himself. The mentioning of the **cross** may be metaphorical as presented by Luke 9:23.

[558] After instructing his disciples to go out and preach, Jesus informs them of the reward in store for them and for those receiving them as guests and accepting their message. Verse 42 speaks of **little ones**, interpreted to be ordinary Christians in contrast to the prophets and righteous ones just spoken of (See [Mark 9:42](#)).

[559] **John** the Baptist was arrested by Herod Antipas (Mark 6:17) very early in Jesus' mission. Whilst remaining in prison, his disciples may have informed him about the actions

and works of Jesus, which would have triggered his curiosity, to which he then sent some of his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether he was the Messiah and if so, declare it openly.

There are, however a number of problems that may need addressing before Jesus gives his reply. The above account contradicts the Gospel of John, where John the Baptist proclaims openly that Jesus is the one he is waiting for, declaring him to be the *lamb of God* (John 1:29-36). Had John the Baptist declared this before his arrest, it would make little sense for him to dispatch disciples to Jesus to confirm his position. John the Baptist also recognises Jesus as the Messiah early in Matthew's account (3:14), thus making it all the more confusing why he would ask for confirmation later.

If John the Baptist did send out his disciples to confirm the identity of Jesus, then the accounts of the Gospel of John about Jesus being the *lamb of God* and the statement of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:14 cannot be true.

[560] Jesus' reply does not answer the question directly, instead he goes on to explain the present era and how it fulfils prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Numerous Jewish works written around the time of Jesus held the view that after the coming of the Messiah, a universal peace would descend on the land, that pain and suffering would cease, even the pain of child birth would cease and farmers would no longer tire from their work (2 [Syriac Apocalypse of] Baruch Chapter 74); in essence undoing the punishment God places on Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:16-17. Jesus is describing the build-up to such a scene, but like all prophecies, these are not to be taken literally, since Jesus did not bring about such changes, nor are such changes described in his second coming.

[561]

For details on John the Baptist and Elijah see [Mark 9:11-13](#). See under [Mark 1:3](#) for the interpretation of the Old Testament quotation.

[562] After the question and answer session of John the Baptist, Jesus proceeds to discuss the status of John. He makes a rather bold statement; that God has never raised anyone greater than John the Baptist, which is difficult to interpret; are we to accept that John was greater than the likes of prophet Abraham, or the great Law bringer Moses and countless other prophets mentioned in the Old Testament? Some might argue that perhaps Jesus was talking about John's mission; that his mission of proclaiming and paving the way for the Messiah was greater than any other mission in history. However, again this is very unlikely to have been historical, since it is placing the importance and greatness of Jesus himself above that of all other previous prophets as well. With no alternative, we are left with the option that the above saying did not come from Jesus, but was probably simply made up by either our author Matthew or another Christian prior to him.

The second part of the verse proves the above point, in that the saying cannot be attributed to Jesus but rather to an early Christian. What the saying means, is that John is the greatest of the *previous generation*, but the least in the new generation, i.e. Christians, are greater than John. In other words, John was the greatest of men prior to Jesus and now the least Christian is greater than that, or the least Christian is greater than the likes of Prophet Abraham, or Moses. The whole saying is nonsensical.

[563] Some commentators have interpreted this as pointing to *Zealots*; those Jewish revolutionaries who waged war on the Roman Empire thinking that the Kingdom of God would draw near and God or His Messiah would provide aid in their war. But this is difficult since Zealots had been around long before the coming of John the Baptist.

By stating that the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered **violence** may point to the persecution that the Church underwent by both Jews and Gentiles. This persecution of Jesus and his followers only occurred *after* the crucifixion where Jesus was condemned as a criminal and those who continued following him were excommunicated. Thus if Jesus spoke the above, in reference to the persecution he and his followers were undergoing, the saying has to be a post-crucifixion saying, i.e. a saying from Jesus *after* he survived the cross ordeal. Matthew most likely read it in his source and had to place it within Jesus' lifetime in Judea, and thus placed it above.

[564] For Matthew, John is one of the prophets who has prophesied, and he is the last one to do so before the coming of the Messiah.

[565] See under [Mark 9:11-13](#) for the interpretation of this verse.

[566] Textual Variant

The original wording **by her deeds** is found in early Manuscripts such as Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. This was changed to *her children* in the Codex Vaticanus by a Christian scribe sometime in the tenth or eleventh century CE. This was to make the above text in Matthew agree with the parallel saying in Luke 7:35 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.146).

Commentary

Jesus proceeds to explain and liken this generation to children who were ignored or neglected in the market place. The children may refer to the prophets John and Jesus. They called out to the people, but the latter did not respond. Jesus then goes on to speak about the different lifestyles of the two prophets, even though both were condemned by the Jewish masses: the harsh and strict way in which John lived his life resulted in him being accused of being possessed by a **demon** (although the gospels don't record any such allegation); whilst Jesus being more lenient and sitting with the sinners was accused of being a **glutton** and a **drunkard**. The last phrase about wisdom being justified by its work may be linked to verse 2 where John the Baptist heard of the *works* of Jesus, which Matthew is now referring to as wisdom.

[567] After speaking about John the Baptist, Jesus then seems to go into a tirade against a few towns in which he had visited. He likens them to **Tyre** and **Sidon**, these two cities were prophesied against by prophet Ezekiel in Chapters 26-28 in the book of Ezekiel. Had Ezekiel performed similar miracles as Jesus had done, then these two cities would have repented, likewise the town of Sodom which was destroyed by God after their refusal to listen to prophet Lot.

However, there is a difficulty with the above Woes: the Gospel of Matthew contains no record of Jesus preaching in **Chorazin** or **Bethsaida**. Cursing two cities, that are not even mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew seems rather unfair. Either Jesus did visit the cities and Matthew had no information to write about it, or he felt there was no need to speak about the unsuccessful mission, or it might actually have been a creation of the early church: The two cities refused to believe in the missionaries who were sent to them, so the Church might have created the above tradition that Jesus cursed them, and this is why they disbelieved.

[568] The **wise** and those of **understanding** above would refer to the Jewish priests and scribes who were well educated, particularly in Jewish Law and traditions, whilst the **infants** would refer to the rather simple-minded people who could not afford to attend such schools and lessons.

[569] This passage, known as the *Johannine Thunderbolt*, is very alien to the Jesus portrayed in the Synoptics (first three gospels) and is closer to the Jesus portrayed in the fourth gospel. It originates from Q, a document which both the author Matthew and Luke had access to when they wrote their gospels. But it is so different from the other prayers of Jesus in the Synoptics that most scholars doubt its authenticity and claim that it was probably created by the later Gentile Church (Geza Vermes, *The Authentic Gospels of Jesus*, 2003, p.229).

[570] Important Words

ζυγόν (*zugon*) – Noun, accusative singular, masculine of ζυγος (*zugos*) meaning: *yoke; strict requirements; heavy obligations* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[571] Jesus then invites people to come to him and learn from him; he invites them to take on his teachings, and in them they will find rest and peace. However, many scholars believe that the saying does not originate from Jesus, as the term ζυγος (*zugos*) translated **yoke** or *strict requirements* is used just in this one instance in Matthew's Gospel. If it is authentic, its meaning is probably that Jesus' teachings are not necessarily light, but when followed will bring about peace and comfort.

[572] Matthew is copying the text of Mark; he copies from Mark 2:23-28 where Mark discusses Jesus walking through grainfields very early in his ministry, Matthew records the same event much later. Matthew also adds the fact that the disciples of Jesus were **hungry**, just like David.

[573] According to Jewish Law, it is not permitted to work on the Sabbath. The Old Testament says: "But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates" (Ex 20:10). The strict Pharisees saw the disciples plucking the grain to eat, and objected to Jesus that his disciples were breaking the commandment contained in Exodus. Why the Pharisees were following Jesus and his disciples around on the Sabbath in a grain field is not explained. Much like Matthew 9:14-17, the disciples are accused of breaking the commandment whilst Jesus is left alone, thus pointing to perhaps another story made up by the early Church when it came under fire from the Jews for breaking the Sabbath rules. See under Mark 3:2 for more details on Sabbath laws.

[574] In Mark 2:26, the supposed reply of Jesus contained an error, see notes under the verse for details. Matthew probably noticed the error and 'corrected' Jesus' reply. What did Jesus really say? We can never be sure, but it definitely wasn't what Mark tells us, Matthew's version might be more correct.

[575] The traditional Christian interpretation of this verse has Jesus himself being the one greater than the Temple. But this is not what Jesus states here, he simply refers to **something** being greater than the Temple, which is an open question. The answer lies in the very next verse; the Temple was used for sacrifice, and Jesus' argument in verse 5 is that the Temple priests are permitted to carry out their sacrifices on the Sabbath. But in verse 7 compassion supersedes sacrifice; thus what is greater than the Temple? Compassion and mercy. If someone is permitted to violate the Sabbath for sacrifices, how much more will they be permitted to violate the Sabbath for compassion?

[576] This quotation is from Hosea 6:6, and seems to be important for Matthew since he quotes it earlier in 9:13. It might have been important for Jesus as well, since it is one of the many passages in the Old Testament which is against the pagan practices of sacrifice. See notes under Mark 11:15 for a detailed analysis of the sacrifice. For Jesus, sacrifices were not important, rather compassion was.

The above statement by Jesus also directly contradicts the numerous statements of Paul and modern Christians who teach and preach that God requires a sacrifice in order for people to be saved. This is simply not the case, as Jesus and Prophet Hosea taught.

[577] This verse has often been interpreted by many Christians to argue that Jesus is claiming to be **Lord of the Sabbath**, i.e. that he himself is permitted to break and abrogate the Sabbath Laws. However, as already explained under Mark 2:10, the phrase *son of man* can and has on numerous occasions been used to refer to general mankind, and the above saying of Jesus is in agreement with the Talmudic saying in the above paragraph. Furthermore, had Jesus meant that he himself is Lord and is able to abrogate the Sabbath Law, then he would not have justified his disciples' behaviour by quoting the Old Testament, but would have rather argued that he is Lord and that the Sabbath Law does not apply to him and his disciples.

It should be noted that Jesus and his early community would have followed the Sabbath, as he instructs his disciples to pray that the tribulation in the later days does not occur

on the Sabbath in Matt 24:20. Had he abrogated the Sabbath Law, there would be no point in them praying for the tribulations not to occur on the Sabbath.

[578] In this account, Matthew has copied the text of **Mark 3:1-6**, but makes a number of modifications. The first is that Matthew explicitly states that Jesus **entered *their* synagogue**, while Mark simply had Jesus enter the synagogue. There is a clear *us* and *them* in the above verse.

[579] While in the Synagogue, in the Gospel of Mark, whom Matthew is copying from, the former tells us that Jesus asks the people if it is permitted to heal on the Sabbath, while Matthew modifies the text so that the people ask Jesus instead. He gives the affirmative and adds a further argument to support his answer. In fact, a similar question was often discussed among different Jews: Is it permitted to save an animal that has fallen into a hole or pit on the Sabbath? To the strict Essenes, it was a categorical *No* (CD 11:13-14); later Rabbis did not permit the lifting of the animal, and although they did allow feeding it and putting blankets on it, the animal had to come out of the hole by itself (b.*Sabb.* 128b). Jesus' view is more relaxed, since again he sees the Sabbath as a favour and not a burden on man. Furthermore, he gives the example of a farmer who has just *one* sheep, on which he solely depends.

[580] The rest of the story is similar to Mark's account: Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to show him his hand. He then treated him, healing his hand and broke the Sabbath regulations according to the way the Jews interpreted it.

However, if the above text is to be interpreted literally, what did Jesus do? He only told the man to stretch out his hand. Did that violate the Sabbath Law? Not really, no particular action was taken by Jesus, and so even if the above account happened as narrated, the Pharisees could not have charged Jesus with working, since he only spoke.

In essence, this passage is much like the previous chapters, which present Jesus' opinion concerning the dos and don'ts of the Sabbath; mercy and compassion are more important; likewise, healing or doing good to a fellow brother overrides the Sabbath Laws.

Finally, Matthew removes the reference to the Herodians plotting with the Pharisees in accusing Jesus which is recorded in the Gospel of Mark (3:6). In Matthew, it is just the Pharisees who do so.

The differences of the above account between Mark and Matthew are subtle, but still rather obvious; does Jesus ask the people if it is permitted to do good on the Sabbath? (Mark); or do the people ask Jesus whether it is permitted to heal? (Matthew). Are the people silent (Mark) or not? (Matthew). Did Jesus give a further example of the sheep falling into a pit (Matthew) or not? (Mark) And finally, Matthew removes the reference of Jesus looking around angrily and groaning (Mark 3:5).

[581]

Important Words

ἔθνησιν (*ethnesin*) – Noun, dative plural, neuter of ἔθνος (*ethnos*) meaning: *Nation; people; often used to designate non-Jews; Gentiles; foreigners* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). As will be explained below, the above is actually a quotation from Isa 42:1-4. In that text, the Hebrew word גוי (*goh'y*) means: *nation; people. Specifically of descendants of Abraham; definitely of Israel* (The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs). Thus it would be preferable to translate the above word as *Nations* rather than **Gentiles** as the RSV does.

[582] Matthew is quoting Isaiah 42:1-4. It is not clear why he quotes these four verses as they don't apply in the context of Jesus' story so far in Matthew: Jesus leaves the Pharisees and goes off to preach; he is followed; he heals numerous people; and instructs them not to tell anyone about it. The passage quoted by Matthew in Isaiah discusses the servant/son of God who announces judgement on all nations in a very peaceful and loving manner (not breaking the crushed reed etc.). It may be that Matthew is relating

the whole of Jesus' life in this quotation, rather than the immediate context; for there can really be no other explanation for such a quote in this context.

[583] The first mention of **Beelzebul** is made in 2 Kings 1:2, as the god of Ekron; one of the five chief cities of the Philistines. Beelzebul (meaning *lord of the flies*) is a deliberate biblical corruption of the original name of the pagan god *Baal Zabul* (*Baal the Prince*). The Pharisees are accusing Jesus of being possessed by Baal. The charge and accusation are serious, since according to the Torah, mediums and wizards are to be put to death: "A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 20:27). Although the above charge is not raised against Jesus in any of his trials, yet it is still serious enough for Jesus to refute it harshly in the next few verses.

[584] Matthew's account above is almost identical to that of the Gospel of Mark 3:22-27, please see under Mark's verses for an interpretation of the **Strong man** parable.

There are subtle differences between Matthew and Mark's versions of the same story, these include: in Mark, those who accuse Jesus are scribes, but in Matthew there are now Pharisees; verse 27 is also an addition; the sons may actually refer to those Jews who also cast out demons before Jesus, the likes of prophet Solomon and numerous other saints. The final verse is also absent in Mark, which speaks of those not with Jesus being against him, i.e. the evil forces.

[585] After Jesus refutes the absurd claims of the scribes that he is demon-possessed, he explains further that all sins of mankind will be forgiven. But he who **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit**, he will never be forgiven. Jesus being possessed by the power of God is accused of being possessed by the power of demons and false gods. Being a prophet of God, he was extremely jealous and protective of his Lord, and makes a radical and powerful statement; that they may malign Jesus himself, but not the revelation he received from God which is delivered to Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

[586] Verses 33-35 are similar to Matthew 7:15-20. See under those verses for the interpretation of the parable.

[587] Jesus then warns his accusers of the severity of the accusation they have made; they have not insulted him, but have insulted and blasphemed against God. He warns them that they should be more careful in their utterances, since everything will be brought to light on the day of judgement. The Holy Quran makes the same point made by Jesus above:

"Whoso does good equal to the weight of an atom will see it, and whoso does evil to the weight of an atom will see it." (Holy Quran 99: 8-9).

[588] The actual sign of Jonah is only mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew; Mark makes no mention of Jonah and Luke omits it as well. It is rather odd that this is the *only* sign Jesus provides them with (verse 38), even though the gospels are full of Jesus' miracles. The Sign of Jonah therefore, must have been a very important one.

Jonah was a prophet of the Old Testament, who lived around the eighth century BCE. In the book attributed to his name, it is stated that God ordered Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh. He disobeyed God and attempted to flee by sailing to Tarshish. During a storm he was cast overboard where he would meet certain death. But he was miraculously saved by being swallowed by a whale for three days and three nights to which he prayed in its belly, and was delivered on land. He then went to preach to the city and they all believed in him, which is supported by verse 41 below.

Thus far, very little resemblance is seen between Jonah and the Christian version of Jesus: the former preaches to the Ninevites only once, whilst Jesus preaches to the Jews countless times; Jonah disobeys God and flees (note the Islamic tradition does not agree with this), whereas Jesus does not; Jonah is alive in the belly of the whale whilst Jesus is

dead in the heart of the earth; Jonah is successful in his mission in that the Ninevites accept his message, whilst Jesus is not since the Jews try to kill him.

Even if the resemblance is limited to what Jesus says above; that Jonah was **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth, how does this resemble the Christian version of Jesus? For Jonah was *alive* in the whale, whilst Jesus was *dead* according to the traditional Christian interpretation. Some Christians argue that it was simply a time prophecy; that Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, and thus shall Jesus be in the heart of the earth for the same time. According to Rabbinic literature (yShab 12a; bPes 4a) any part of a day or part of a night can be counted as a full day or night. Thus Jesus being crucified on Friday afternoon and coming out of the tomb on Sunday morning can be *three days* but it is impossible to count *three nights* for the period, as there is only Friday night and Saturday night. The maths does not add up! To state that the *one* sign to the Jews given by Jesus was simply a time prophecy completely trivialises it, and worse still it isn't even fulfilled!

It is important to note that the above makes little sense if an attempt to interpret the sign of Jonah if applied to the Christian version of Jesus. However, in order to understand the prophecy, certain assumptions must be made; the most important being that *Jesus survived the crucifixion* (explained later in this work). With this in mind, the interpretation of the prophecy can be broken down:

1. Prophet Jonah's miracle was that he was cast out of a ship in a storm; he faced *certain death*, but God *saved* him. Therefore like Jonah, God was to perform a similar miracle with Jesus. And closer study shows that Jesus was sentenced to death by crucifixion, he faced *certain death*, but God *saved* him.
2. Jonah was *alive* in the belly of the whale, so too was Jesus *alive* in the heart of the earth (Joseph's tomb).
3. Jonah's people *accepted* his teachings *after* the miracle. Likewise, did the Jews *accept* Jesus' teachings *after* he was saved from the cross. These would be the Jews not in Judea but elsewhere to the East and in the Diaspora.

In light of the above, the Sign of Jonah now becomes a powerful and mighty prophecy, as opposed to the trivial and inaccurate time prophecy as is often attributed to the *one* sign given to the Jews.

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) was the *first person* to properly understand the Sign of Jonah, he wrote over a hundred years ago:

"Jesus was a true prophet and as he knew that God, whose beloved he was, would save him from an accursed death, he made a prophecy in the form of a parable, revealed to him by God, in which he hinted that he would not die on the cross... and that he would, like the Prophet Jonah, pass through a state of swoon. In the parable he had also hinted that he would come out of the bowels of the earth and would then join the people and, like Jonah, would be honoured by them. So this prophecy too was fulfilled, for Jesus, coming out of the bowels of the earth, went to his tribes who lived in the eastern countries, Kashmir and Tibet etc." (*Jesus in India*, 2016, p.17-18)

[589] The text follows on from the Sign of Jonah but shows no dependence or link to it. What is Jesus talking about? It was either an exorcism story or a parable, the latter being more likely since it contains no instruction on exorcising. If it was a parable, the meaning is not certain, but likely refers to the Jewish people, that if they do not accept Jesus and do not repent, then their situation in the future will be much worse than before.

[590] Textual Variant

Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus both omit verse 47, whilst Codex Bezae includes it. Question is, did the original author write verse 47 or not? Those who argue that verse 47 was original give two reasons: 1) It was omitted by mistake by some scribes due to homoeoteleuton, which happens when the scribe was copying a verse like 46 above which ended

with *lalesai* in Greek and then when he went to copy the next verse (47) his eye saw that that verse too ended with the same Greek word and therefore he skipped it, thinking he already had written it. 2) Jesus response in verse 48 requires a response to someone's statement.

However, those scholars who think that verse 47 was added later by a scribe also state two points: 1) Many early manuscripts omit the verse, and the chances of homoeoteleuton happening to so many scribes is unlikely. 2) Scribes may have felt prompted to write in the verse to better enable their readers to understand, while the original author thought his readers would have understood themselves.

Based on the above, most scholars believe that the verse was added later by a scribe and was not original (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.149).

[591] This entire passage was copied from the Gospel of Mark 3:31-35, for a detailed explanation, see under Mark.

[592] Like the previous chapter, Matthew copies the Gospel of Mark (4:1-9) almost word for word in this passage. For the interpretation of this passage, see notes in the Gospel of Mark.

[593] Matthew again is using the text of Mark, this time Mark 4:10-12, however, he expands it, particularly the quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10. The blame is now on the people; Jesus is not attempting to hide the teaching from the people by talking in parables, rather it is because of their hard-heartedness that he is speaking in parables. This account of Matthew seems more complete and more accurate than the gospel of Mark, since it makes more sense and is less cruel. Jesus is not intentionally hiding his teachings as the Gospel of Mark portrays, but rather it is the people who are refusing to listen and understand his teachings. This is in fact a common trait of people when it comes to the Prophets of God, so says the Holy Quran:

“So for their breaking their covenant and their rejecting the Signs of Allah, and their killing the Prophets unjustly and their saying: ‘Our hearts are wrapped up.’ Nay but Allah has put a seal upon them because of their disbelief, so they do not believe but a little.” (4:156).

[594] Jesus may be pointing out that many people in the past awaited the coming of the Messiah, that they longed to see and hear what the disciples have. What have the disciples seen and heard? The reader of his gospel is reminded of 11:4-5, where they see and hear all the great things that are happening in the time of the Messiah.

[595] The interpretation of the parable is very similar to the interpretation given in Mark 4:13-20, which actually is the text that our author Matthew copied. See comments under Mark for details. There is one rather significant difference that Matthew makes; he removes the questioning of the disciples, giving them more credit; they are not without understanding (Mark 4:13). The image of the original disciples is improved.

[596] Jesus himself actually provides the interpretation of the above verses later in verses 36-43.

[597] Matthew in the above is utilising the Gospel of Mark, he is copying from Mark 4:30-32. Readers should read the notes under those verses for the interpretation.

[598] Jesus continues telling parables, this time the kingdom of heaven is likened to **leaven**. The measures of flour would surprise the original readers, as **three measures** is

roughly forty litres of flour, enough for a meal to feed one hundred and fifty people; so an ordinary housewife was not intended here. The meaning of the parable would refer to the subtle emergence of the kingdom of Heaven, which when planted among many people will influence all. It was thus the mission and duty of the disciples to plant or mix Jesus' teachings and message among the masses and enable them to spread and influence them.

[599] Matthew's version is very similar to Mark 4:33-34, with the addition of the quotation of Psalm 78:2. The first part of the quotation is clear since Jesus spoke in parables. The second part presents a new concept though; that Jesus would reveal to the disciples what was hidden from the very beginning, the very foundations of the world.

[600] Jesus, a little later is asked for an interpretation of the Parable of the Tares which he spoke in verses 24-30. It begins with the man, representing Jesus himself (for the interpretation of son of man, see Mark 2:10). The seeds are his disciples and followers, sons of the kingdom; whilst the bad seeds are sons of the evil one, the evil people who lived among the followers of Jesus, the former being sown by the devil himself. The reapers are the angels who will come in the end of days and throw the evil ones into the fire whilst the sons of the kingdom will shine forth in the kingdom of God.

Verse 41 stands out somewhat, perhaps because it illustrates the evolution of religious thought in the early Church. Jesus is seen to come in the latter days to *judge*, he and his angels, whom he sends out to gather the wicked people to cast into hell and lead the good into heaven. The concept of the Jewish Messiah coming at the end of days being modelled on Daniel 7:13 had become relatively widespread by the time Jesus came: The one like a *son of man* in Daniel 7:13 came to be interpreted as a Messianic figure in the Parables of Enoch (Ch 38); who comes in the end of times to judge the sinners and drive out the wicked. This idea and concept may have influenced the early Church as well, into linking this role to Jesus, particularly his second coming.

[601] The two parables have similar interpretations. In the first, a man stumbles across a **treasure** in a **field**, and wanting it all for himself he intends to go away and buy the field, but in the meantime he hides the treasure so no one may discover it until the purchase is complete. He then sells all that he has (he could have borrowed some money to buy the field), but the parable stresses that he sells *everything* to purchase the field containing the treasure. Thus the parable stresses risk and complete devotion to attaining one's goal, and in this case the goal being the attainment of the kingdom of heaven.

The lesson is repeated in the parable of the trader who finds a valuable pearl. No mention is made of whether he attains a good price for it, nor what he intends to do with it. But rather just like the previous parable, he goes off and sells all that he has to purchase the pearl. In like manner should not people risk everything in attaining the kingdom of heaven?

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Madhi gives us a similar parable:

“Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring even though one may have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose one's self to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will save you. What shall I do, and by what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to their ears so that they should listen?

If you belong to Allah, rest assured that Allah will indeed belong to you.” (*Roohani Khazain* Vol. 19: Kashti Nuh, pp. 21-22)

[602]

The kingdom of heaven in this parable is likened to a **drag-net**; this was no ordinary fishing net, but was around three hundred metres in length and about two metres wide.

The bottom of the net was weighted, thus it sank whilst the top was attached to corks or some wood to cause it to float. This was then dragged by a boat to land, catching all kinds of fish and animals inside, which were then sorted on the beach. The good fish were collected whilst the bad were thrown back into the sea.

A similar process will occur in the end of the age, where angels will gather all the people and separate the bad from the good; the bad ending up in the fire. This ends Jesus' parables and teachings on this occasion; he teaches how to attain salvation (the kingdom of heaven) but ends with a dire warning, that those not pulling their weight will be picked out of the righteous and cast into hell.

[603] The parables end with Jesus pausing and asking his disciples if they understand. Jesus then speaks of **scribes**; these would not be Jewish scribes, since they were **disciples in the kingdom of Heaven**, but rather scribes who followed Jesus, who studied both the Old Testament and the message of Jesus, and perhaps even composed writings, much like Matthew himself. Jesus is giving them a special task; they are to bring out the old (most likely referring to the Old Testament) and the new (the gospel message of Jesus). Matthew wished to emphasise the importance of not disregarding the old and wished his audience to understand the importance of the Torah Law; thus the scribes were to bring out both.

[604] Matthew is using the text of [Mark 6:1-6](#). For the general interpretation of the above passage, see notes in the Gospel of Mark. Interestingly though, Matthew makes slight modifications to Mark's gospel: Jesus now comes to his native land and teaches in **their** Synagogues rather than Mark's *the* Synagogues. It may be that Matthew is writing and attempting to differentiate between his own community and the general Jews, who, by the time he wrote his gospel had removed the Jewish Christians from Judaism altogether.

[605] Matthew also disagrees with Mark, and makes Jesus the **son** of a carpenter, rather than a carpenter himself as Mark states. Perhaps he thought it inappropriate to refer to Jesus as a carpenter. See notes on [Mark 6:3](#) for more details.

[606] The above might appear new to many readers; Jesus had brothers and sisters. Many Christian groups believe that Mary was a virgin all of her life, and therefore, those mentioned above weren't biological siblings but were said to be his family due to their close association to Jesus, or perhaps Joseph's children from a previous marriage. However, there is no proof of such a theory. It is safe to assume that they were real brothers of Jesus, in the sense that they were children of Mary and Joseph after Jesus was born.

We know a great deal about one of the brothers of Jesus; James who headed the Jerusalem Church after Jesus left, see notes under [Mark 6:3](#) for details. The other brothers are also well known, **Judas** (or Jude) is traditionally said to be the author of the letter of Jude in the New Testament. Other than that, no other information exists of the others.

[607] Not wishing to say that Jesus *could not* do mighty works as [Mark 6:5](#) states, Matthew has it that ***Jesus did not*** do mighty works. The other subtle change is that Matthew has removed any reference to Jesus' relatives dishonouring him. This is no surprise, as already mentioned in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Matthew was a Petrine Christian, in that he was a follower of Peter who was in turn under the leadership of James. Thus showing that Matthew disagreed with Mark and did not portray the relatives of Jesus as disbelievers.

[608]

The source Matthew uses for this verse is [Mark 6:14](#).

[609]

Matthew continues to copy the Gospel of Mark, this time from 6:17-29. But Matthew's version is a summary of Mark's: Herod Antipas arrested John for the same reason as depicted in Mark; the criticism of his marriage to his sister-in-law. Yet unlike Mark, who states that Herod protected John from his wife and feared John due to his holy and righteous conduct, Matthew states that Herod wished to **kill** John but could not do so for **fear** of the **Jews** since they **considered** him to be a **prophet**.

The girl danced on his birthday just as in Mark and pleased Herod, which resulted in him asking her for any favour. But after hearing her request; the head of John the Baptist, one would expect Herod to be glad and pleased, since it gave him the perfect opportunity to rid himself of John and shift the blame of his death to another. Yet, Matthew records that Herod was **grieved** by the request! It looks as though Matthew simply copied the text of Mark, making a bit of a blunder without realising the contradiction he has just made. The rest of the narrative is the same as Mark's and readers are recommended to read notes under Mark 6:17-29.

[610] After Jesus hears about the death of John the Baptist he withdraws to a lonely place, most likely to pray for his cousin and fellow prophet.

[611] The Matthean account is the same as Mark 6:32-44, readers are recommended to check notes under Mark for details of the feeding. There are subtle differences in the two accounts however, the first being that in the Gospel of Mark Jesus pities them and *teaches* them; in Matthew he pities and **heals** them. I suppose he might have done both!

[612] In Mark 6:37, after being told that they should feed the people, the disciples retort rather sarcastically, asking Jesus if they should go and buy a huge amount of bread to feed five thousand. The dialogue in Matthew above is toned down somewhat.

[613] Important Words

προσεκύνησαν (*prosekunaysan*) – Verb, aorist active indicative, 3rd person plural of προσκυνέω (*prosekynéo*), meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

I disagree with the WEB's translation, which translate the above as *they worshipped him*. As shown in the Important Words above, the word does not *only* mean **worshipped**, but would be better translated as *bowed down or paid homage to him*. The same verb is used in the book of Daniel describing the action of Nebuchadnezzar who also *paid homage* to Daniel (Daniel 2:46). However, to believe that Nebuchadnezzar *worshipped* Daniel, and Daniel, a (prophet of God) readily accepted it, would be absurd.

In the above story, Matthew is using the Gospel of Mark, who omits any mention of the disciples *worshipping* or even bowing down to Jesus, instead in Mark the disciples were surprised and then start thinking about the loaves of bread which they seem to have after Jesus fed the 5,000 (Mark 6:52).

[614] Matthew continues the narrative just like his source, the Gospel of Mark, this time he copies from Mark 6:45-52: Like in Mark, Jesus dismisses the crowd and prays for a long period on the mountain. When he returns to his disciples, he finds them quite far from shore, so he decides to 'walk over' to them.

Matthew also makes an interesting addition to the text of Mark; Peter now decides that he too wishes to join his master and walk on water, and manages to successfully do so until he sees the power of the wind and his faith begins to waver, at which point he then begins to sink, but all is well when Jesus grabs him and pulls him up. This is interesting, since some Christians point to Jesus' *divine* power which enabled him to walk on water, but Peter does too!

As mentioned, this story is mentioned in the Gospels of Mark and John 6:16-21, and both these omit the fact that Peter too managed to walk on water, perhaps they thought it best not mention that another normal man (Peter) partake in this *divine* miracle. Matthew's account proves otherwise, that there was nothing divine about it at all!

There is a close parallel to the above story, but this time it is recorded in Indian scriptures: the Buddhist Jatakas, who walked on water whilst being absorbed in thoughts of the Buddha, but then his thoughts wandered a bit and he began to sink, but regaining his composure and retaining his thoughts he continued to walk on water until he reached dry land (The Jataka No.190). Some have argued that the Matthean account above was influenced by the Buddhist account (Richard Garbe, *India and Christendom*). However, I prefer to think that the opposite may be just as feasible.

The final change Matthew makes is to remove the rather confused ending of Mark 6:52 and replaces it with the disciples paying homage to Jesus. Numerous translations of the Bible including the WEB and NRSV write that they worshipped Jesus, but as explained in the Important Words, this is unlikely, particularly for the Jewish Christian Matthew who, being a firm believer and follower of the Torah would not have elevated Jesus to a god and have the disciples worship him.

[615] Matthew's story above is copied from Mark 6:53-56, but condensed slightly. See notes under Mark for the interpretation.

[616] The source of this account is Mark 7:1-23, for a detailed analysis of the above, see notes under Mark. Matthew, though makes numerous modifications to the text of Mark: To begin with Matthew is not required to explain the traditions of the Pharisees to his audience (Jewish Christians) as Mark does in 7:4 whose audience being Gentiles would have required an explanation.

[617] The answer of Jesus is also ordered differently in Matthew compared to Mark; in the latter Jesus first refers to the prophecy of Isaiah and then proceeds to explain how the Pharisees do not honour their parents. But in Matthew, Jesus first condemns them for not honouring their parents and then refers to the prophecy of Isaiah.

[618] Matthew adds more to the text of Mark. After Jesus addresses the crowd, he then leaves and is told by his disciples that the Pharisees were offended by his saying; to which Jesus then responds to leave the Pharisees, for they are not those who have been planted by God, and since they have not been planted, they will be uprooted, i.e. they will be destroyed or come to nought. They are called **blind guides**, leading each other astray with their man-made traditions. Mark seems to be completely unaware of this and skips it in his gospel.

[619] Peter then asks the explanation of this parable spoken in verse 11, while it seems to be a group question in Mark. Jesus replies in Matthew with the same response as he did in Mark. However, Matthew omits possibly the most important part in Mark's text; *that Jesus declared all food clean*. Instead, he simply has Jesus say that what goes into the mouth, enters the stomach and is then passed out. He also omits Mark's verse 18: *...everything outside coming into the man is not able to defile him*. By doing so, Matthew has backed away from the radical conclusion of Mark's *making all food clean* (Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2007, p.233).

I believe Matthew, being a Jewish Christian and follower of the Law never agreed with Mark's conclusions, and therefore omits the opinion in his gospel.

[620] In verse 19, Matthew reduces the number of vices that come from the man's heart. But verse 20 is interesting and not present in the text of Mark, and thus concludes the whole episode for Matthew; it is these things which defile a man, not the eating of food **with unwashed hands**. Jesus here is not stating that all foods are clean, but rather going back to the original question and answering it: unwashed hands do not defile a man. Either Mark was unaware of Jesus' last statement or he intentionally chose to skip over the point since it would then nullify what he had written earlier; that all foods are declared clean. Or Matthew chose to insert that statement to his gospel to enforce the concept that *not* all foods are clean and Jesus was only talking about the traditions of the Pharisees; that of washing the hands.

Either way, the discrepancy cannot be reconciled in the two versions above. Matthew's version however, is to be preferred since it goes more in line with all his teachings and with events which happened after Jesus' departure; see under [Mark 7:23](#).

[621] Matthew's account of the above is originally from [Mark 7:24-30](#), for a detailed discussion of the story, see notes under Mark's gospel. Although Matthew copies from Mark, he does make numerous changes to the text. In Mark, it states that Jesus enters a house (7:24), he might have meant a Gentile's house, and it is in this house where the Gentile woman comes in and begs him to heal her daughter. However, Matthew modifies this and omits the reference to him entering any house, having instead the woman **came out from those borders** to Jesus. Why does Matthew omit the reference to him entering into a Gentile house? It may be due to Matthew wishing to portray Jesus as a true Jew who did not wish to defile himself by entering a Gentile's house.

[622]

Where was the woman from? According to Mark she was a Syrophoenician, whilst according to Matthew she was a **Canaanite**. Again, this is a minor contradiction which cannot be reconciled.

[623]

In Mark, the woman pleads with Jesus and he responds to her immediately, saying that the children must be fed first... (7:27). However in Matthew, Jesus ignores her and when the disciples intervene asking Jesus to dismiss her, since they find her annoying, Jesus then makes perhaps the strongest and most radical statement in the gospels: **that he was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**. This is an explicit statement by Jesus limiting his mission directly. He tells the disciples and the woman that he was sent *only* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This important statement is not in Mark, and so was either from an alternative tradition of Matthew or Mark intentionally thought to omit it.

This is the second time in the Gospel of Matthew that *lost sheep* are spoken of, the other instance being in 10:6. This may well explain what Jesus was doing in Tyre and Sidon: preaching to the Diaspora Jews in Gentile lands.

[624] **Important Words**

προσεκύει (*prosekunei*) – Verb, imperfect active indicative, 3rd person singular of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*) meaning: *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates the word as *worshipped*, however I disagree, since the Greek word has a primary meaning of kneeling down. The RSV translates the above as I have as well.

[625] Jesus only turns to the woman once she steps in front of him and begs him to heal her daughter. In Mark, Jesus tells her that the children (Jews) are to be fed *first* followed by the dogs (Gentiles), which closely follows the ideas and theology of Paul in Rom 1:16. However, this is not what Jesus says in Matthew. In Matthew's Gospel there is no order, no priority, it is simple; Jesus was sent **only** to Israel, and Jesus only speaks to the woman after his disciples plead with him to send her away since they found her pleading rather irritating.

Matthew also modifies the woman's response. The dogs now eat from the crumbs of the **masters'** table rather than the children's. Thus she is asking help directly from the master, that being Jesus, and does not wish to have anything to do with the children; the Jews.

It is further interesting to note that the above passage is sandwiched between two strong Jewish orientated passages. Preceding this passage is the one regarding Defilement, where Matthew modifies Mark's Gospel to remove the abolishment of the Food Laws. Following on from the passage, Jesus heals Jewish crowds of all sorts of illnesses, with the latter glorifying the *God of Israel*. As noted above, this passage is perhaps one of the strongest in favour of the mission of Jesus consisting of only preaching to the Jewish

people and not to Gentiles. At least this view is expressed in the Gospel of Matthew, who himself was a Petrine (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book) and wished to portray the message that within Jesus' lifetime, at least before the 'resurrection', he had concern only for the Jewish people and no one else. The explicit statement (verse 24) cannot be interpreted in any other way.

[626] After curing the Canaanite woman with the demonic daughter, Jesus leaves the place and climbs up a **mountain** and **sits** there. Many sick are brought to him and he heals them. The source of Matthew for the above may be the Gospel of Mark 7:31-37, who too continues after Jesus heals the woman. However, Mark records one major healing of a deaf and dumb man, which Matthew omits for no obvious reason.

The reaction of the crowd in Matthew's account is also different from Mark's; in the latter they wonder and spread the word that Jesus heals many people and does many good things, but in Matthew, they all **glorify the God of Israel**. The discrepancy may be due to Mark not being a Jew/Israelite and Matthew being a Jew; thus the former thought it inappropriate to have the crowds glorifying the God of Israel while Matthew felt at ease with such a statement.

[627] Matthew's account is almost identical to that of Mark 8:1-10; see under those verses for the commentary. The main difference between the two accounts is the final verse, where the destination of Jesus is **Magdala** rather than the unknown *Dalmanutha* in Mark. Matthew is probably correct rather than Mark.

[628] Readers may notice there are two *Signs of Jonah* recorded in the Gospel of Matthew; one in Matthew 12:38-42 and the second one here. In fact, this version is very similar to Mark's version (Mark 8:11-13), occurring in the same context and setting as well; following Jesus' miracle of feeding four thousand people with some bread and fish. See next note of what the difference is between this sign of Jonah and the one earlier in Matthew's Gospel.

[629] So are Matthew's two versions of the Sign the same? No, in the one recorded in Chapter 12 Jesus explains the sign; the three days and three nights, but in this passage he simply tells the Pharisees that the only sign that will be given to them is the sign of Jonah, and then departs the scene with no further comment.

Why the difference? This is one of the rare occasions where a doublet in a gospel is not a doublet at all, but that the event or events did in fact happen twice. The first saying is a prophecy, that Jesus was to go through a similar ordeal as Jonah, and this was the sign and miracle. Since it was a prophecy, it was stated before the events took place, in that Jesus informed the Pharisees *before* his crucifixion.

The second saying is not a prophecy, it is rather a statement. The saying is a post-crucifixion saying, *after* Jesus survives the cross ordeal (see the endings of the gospels for much more detail).

The Pharisees or Jews demanded a sign from Jesus again, and Jesus is now reminding them of the prophecy he had given earlier; that he would survive an almost impossible situation like Jonah had done. The prophecy had been fulfilled and now Jesus is warning them: 'You have rejected the Messiah like the people of Nineveh rejected their Prophet. Now, repent, as the people of Nineveh repented or you will be destroyed.' Jesus then walks away. Matthew seems to have access to the tradition but was unsure of where to place it, so he copied Mark's text and placed it in the most awkward and unnatural situation, immediately after Jesus performs one of his greatest signs; see above.

[630]

Matthew is utilising the text of Mark in the above, he copied from Mark 8:14-21, for the interpretation of these verses, see notes under Mark. Matthew does make changes though, subtle but rather obvious: For example, did Jesus warn them of the *leaven of the Pharisees and Herod* (Mark) or the **leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees** (Matthew)?

He could not have said both; thus one of the two, Mark or Matthew is wrong. However, the reason for the discrepancy could be due to Matthew changing the text of Mark, since earlier in Matthew it was the Pharisees and the Sadducees who asked Jesus for a sign rather than just the Pharisees in Mark.

[631] After Jesus leaves the Pharisees and Sadducees, the disciples then return to Jesus, but forget the bread. Unlike Mark, where the disciples bring just one loaf and then later contradict themselves by admitting to having no bread, Matthew corrects his source (Mark) and states that they have no bread at all.

The conversation ensues much like in Mark, with Jesus warning the disciples of their leaven/teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Much like in Mark, the disciples think that he is speaking of bread, even though he says **of the Pharisees and Sadducees**. In turn Jesus rebukes them and instead of questioning them like children in Mark's Gospel, Jesus himself informs them of the previous feeding miracles, which then enables the disciples to understand his saying; that he was speaking of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees and not of bread.

[632] Important Words

Πέτρος (*Petros*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *stone or rock; rocky mass* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott Greek-English Lexicon).

[633] Important Words

πέτρα (*petra*) – Noun, dative singular, feminine of πέτρα (*petra*) meaning: *rock; living rock; bedrock; cliff rock; rocky ground; or soil* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Although the same word is not used for Peter, the two words are very similar and it is often said that Matthew is using a pun in the above; playing with words, affiliating Peter with the rock or foundation of the Church.

[634] Important Words

ᾗδου (*adou*) – Noun, genitive singular, masculine of ᾗδης (*adays*) meaning: *Hades; literally an unseen place; the place of the dead underworld; a temporary underworld prison where the souls of the ungodly await judgement* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[635] After Jesus warns the disciples about the leaven of the bread, he and his disciples move towards Caesarea Philippi and he asks his disciples who they think he is. Matthew's source is **Mark 8:27-30**, with the addition of verses 17-19. The only other significant addition is the list of people's names that the men think Jesus is: along with **John the Baptist, Elijah** or one of the prophets, **Jeremiah** is listed as well.

As mentioned above, verses 17-19 are additions to the Markan text and crucial to the entire narrative. It is likely that Matthew had access to an alternative tradition which Mark did not have access to, or maybe Mark did have access to it, but chose not to write it in his gospel.

After **Peter** speaks out among the twelve and confesses that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus responds by giving him glad tidings of a revelation, that no man on earth had told him, but that he had received this news from God Himself. Whether it was a direct form of revelation is uncertain; perhaps Peter had a dream or had been simply inspired by God to know that Jesus was the Messiah.

Verse 18 is probably the central verse of the passage. Simon, the original name of the disciple is referred to as **the Rock** or Peter. And it is on **this rock** that Jesus will build his Church. Numerous interpretations have been given throughout the ages of what the rock meant; some have linked it to Isa 51:1 where Abraham is the rock, but this does not

suit the above and it would be unlikely that Jesus or the author Matthew would have likened Peter to Abraham himself.

The more common interpretation is that the rock is the foundation stone (λίθος/lithos) of Zion as mentioned in Isa 28:16. There are numerous Jewish traditions speaking of this stone; that it was the stone which God Himself plugged into the world to stop the water gushing out in the flood of Noah, and is the gateway to heaven. Yet, it is difficult to see Peter being likened to this stone; is Peter the gateway to heaven? The fact that he is referred to as the rock (Πετρος/Petros) and not the *stone* (λίθος/lithos) of Zion adds to the unlikelihood of the connection, which is also the viewpoint of the famous Matthean scholar Ulrich Luz (*Hermeneia Commentary Series of Matthew*, 2001, p.362).

It is thus likely that Matthew was not attributing the title of **the Rock** to Peter or to any Jewish tradition, but simply referring to Peter as the foundation on which Jesus was to build his Church or community. It should be noted that Matthew was a Petrine (See [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book) and thus was a follower of Peter as opposed to Paul, which would also explain why Mark (a Pauline) would omit the above and Matthew would readily retain it. The message is straightforward and to the point; Matthew is playing with words and using puns to illustrate that Peter is to play a crucial role in the Church/community which Jesus is to build.

It is interesting to note that Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians (10:4) that Christ is *the Rock*. Was Matthew aware of this? If so, it might even be argued that he intentionally contradicted Paul.

Such will be the Church that the **gates of Hades** will not overpower it. The phrase **gates of Hades** is often interpreted as death and the realm of death (Isa 38:10), and would imply that spiritually the Church will be strong and alive and have no place for death.

Verse 19 gives Peter further power; he is given the **keys of the Kingdom of Heaven**. Many have interpreted this with reference to Isa 22:22 where Eliakim is given the key of the house of David, which in turn gives him authority to open and shut it. However, in the above, Peter is not given the authority to open or shut, rather to **bind** and **loosen**. A possible interpretation is the binding and controlling of demonic power (Mark 3:27). Another and more likely interpretation is from the Rabbinic formula of *forbidding* and *permitting*, which gives the Rabbi the authority to interpret the Torah (Str-B 1:739-41); the latter finding further support in Matthew 23:13 where Jesus accuses the Pharisees of shutting the Kingdom of Heaven to men through their interpretations of the Law. Thus Peter is given the gift of interpreting the Torah Law.

[636] The source of Matthew in the above was [Mark 8:31-33](#), for a detailed interpretation of the made up prophecies, see notes under Mark. The only difference between Mark's text and Matthew's is the telling off by Peter, which is softened by Matthew showing Peter to have great concern for his master.

[637] Like the above, Matthew continues his copying of the Gospel of Mark, this time from [Mark 8:34-38](#). Verses 24 to 26 are exactly the same as Mark, the latter being Matthew's source. Verse 27 is new and an addition to the text of Mark. It refers to the judgement, when the son of man returns (see [Mark 13:24-27](#)) he will judge the people according to their works. The emphasis on *works* is to be highlighted since it is in direct opposition to Paul (Gal 2:16) and in agreement with James in his letter (James 2) and thus in agreement with the thoughts and ideas of a typical Petrine Christian (see [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book). This verse is not present in Mark or in Luke's version of the above account. Did Jesus say it or not then? Which gospel is correct? Since it highlights and agrees with the original followers of Jesus (The Petrines) it seems to be authentic and thus the version in Matthew's Gospel as opposed to both Mark and Luke (who were both Paulines) is correct.

The final verse of Matthew is a copy from [Mark 9:1](#) and prophesies that Jesus would return before all the disciples died. The interesting point is that Matthew copied the above almost half a century after Jesus was on the cross, and as such when the majority of the original disciples had in fact died. So why retain the prophecy when the time frame was almost up? It must be that Matthew had thought that the time was very near and that Jesus would return very shortly.

[638] Matthew is again copying the text of Mark, this time Mark 9:2-10, check notes under Mark for a detailed commentary of the above. The subtle differences are that the voice from God is slightly different in Matthew than in Mark; the former adding the fact that God is well pleased with Jesus.

[639] The reaction of the disciples to the voice is also different: whilst in Mark they seem to hear the voice but look around, perhaps seeking where the voice came from; in Matthew they fall down prostrating themselves out of fear and recover only when Jesus comes to them and touches them.

[640]

Finally, Jesus then instructs the disciples not to speak to anyone about what they saw, most likely the author Matthew was simply copying his source text Mark, but Matthew omits the disciples discussing amongst themselves what raising of the dead meant. This may either be due to the realisation that it contradicts the reactions of the disciples a little earlier, where Peter rebukes Jesus for the same saying, or that Matthew wished not to depict the disciples as dull nitwits.

[641] Matthew is again copying the text of Mark, this time Mark 9:11-13, check notes under Mark for a detailed commentary of the above. However, Matthew adds in his own comment; that the disciples then understand that Jesus was referring to **John the Baptist**.

[642] Matthew continues copying the text of Mark, this time Mark 9:14-29, check notes under Mark for a detailed commentary of the above. Matthew deleted parts of the story though, and begins his version with the father of the son coming to Jesus and introducing his son, whom he himself diagnoses as epileptic. In Mark, Jesus questions the father about how long the boy has been suffering, but not in Matthew, no, Jesus in Matthew's Gospel knows all, he doesn't enquire about anything.

[643] **Important Words**

αὐτόν (*auto*) – pronoun dative singular neuter of αὐτός (*autos*) which is *an intensive pronoun to emphasise identity* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The case is in the neuter, pointing to Jesus rebuking the demon. The RSV translated the word as *him*, perhaps confusing the readers as to whom Jesus was rebuking, the demon or boy. The WEB is more accurate actually, translating it as: *Jesus rebuked the demon, and it went out of him*. However, I have followed the Greek closer in the above.

[644] Much like Mark, Jesus retorts and complains of the **faithless generation**, but this is awkward in the context. Who is Jesus referring to? Is it the disciples who were unable to heal the boy? But in verse 20 they are described as having little faith, not of being faithless. Furthermore, never in the Gospel of Matthew are the disciples ever described as being a **generation**. It thus most likely refers to Jesus' opponents and the opponents of Matthew himself; the Jewish authorities.

There is another problem with the above text. It is clear that Matthew is using the text of Mark, but he makes a bit of a blunder: whilst in Mark, the boy is said to be demon-possessed, in Matthew he is an epileptic. Rather than healing the boy, Jesus rebukes **it**, and the demon comes out. Was the boy demon-possessed or an epileptic? According to Mark, he was demon-possessed and according to Matthew he was both.

[645]

Textual Variant

This verse is missing from numerous new Bible translations such as the RSV, it is present in the Received Text, and therefore in the KJV of the Bible, however it is not present in old manuscripts such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. If this verse was originally written by the author Matthew, then why would a scribe drop it? There is no reason why, and therefore it is likely that it was added by a later scribe to match up with Mark 9:29 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.157).

[646] Important Words

μελλει (*mellei*) – Verb, present active indicative, 3rd person singular of μελλω (*mello*): the word itself has a number of meanings depending on the context and grammar of the sentence, since the above is all in the present tense, the word means *be about to; be going to; or begin to* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The above is based on the WEB which is accurate, as opposed to the RSV which translates the above as *The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men*, which sounds more like Jesus is quoting some prophecy or that the son of man (Jesus) has to be delivered into the hands of men. Rather, the WEB more accurately interprets the Greek to point out that Jesus is aware that he is *about to be* delivered into the hands of men.

[647] The context is the same in Matthew as in Mark; after the healing of the boy, Jesus ‘predicts’ his death again. The source is Mark, but Matthew modifies his source, removing the absurdity of Mark’s final comment that the disciples did not understand the saying. Instead, they react as one would expect, with distress. Thus the reaction of the disciples is the complete opposite in Matthew; in Mark they fail to understand the simple saying, whilst in Matthew they fully understand and are distressed.

This is another example where the two versions of the same account cannot be reconciled; it is not possible that the disciples failed to understand the saying (Mark) and at the same time were distressed by it (Matthew).

[648] Important Words

διδραχμον (*didrachmon*) – noun, accusative, plural, neuter of διδραχμα (*didrachma*) meaning: *double drachman, a silver coin worth two Attic drachmas, two Roman denarii, or a Jewish half-shekel, a tax for the Temple expected of all Jewish makes each year.* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[649] Since the above account is not repeated in Mark or Luke, it is likely to be a tradition which Matthew received himself. The story is about the **half-shekel** which was due from each Jewish adult in the region to pay as Temple Tax. Jewish tax-collectors come to Peter and ask him whether they and Jesus pay the Temple tax; Peter, often being the spokesman, replies in the affirmative.

Later, Jesus asks a rhetorical question; the answer is obvious, that a king’s sons, the princes of a kingdom would not be expected to pay tribute or any form of tax to their father. Some commentators have argued that Jesus is declaring himself and the Church to be the heirs and sons of God (metaphorically) and as such wished not to pay the Temple tax. But since the Temple was Jewish, who else would be expected to pay the tax if not Jews themselves?

The most likely explanation is that Jesus did not advocate a forced method of paying the tax, but rather wished it to be voluntary, since there is no mention of any tax for the Temple in the Old Testament. Having said that, verse 27 does show Jesus in the end paying the tax, perhaps feeling that he is able to afford it, albeit he finds the exact amount of money in a fish!

[650] After the dispute over the Temple tax, the text continues with the disciples asking Jesus **who the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven** is. Matthew’s source for the above is the Gospel of Mark 9:33-37 and the answer of the question is the same, the true sign of greatness lies in humility and servitude. Considering oneself to be last will enable one to be first in the hereafter. Says the Holy Quran:

“Verily, those who believe and do good deeds and humble themselves to their Lord, they are the dwellers of Heaven, they will abide therein forever.” (11: 24).

There are numerous hadith which teach the same message: “Narrated Haritha bin Wahb: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, “Shall I tell you of the people of Paradise? They comprise every poor humble person, and if he swears by Allah to do something, Allah will fulfill it; while the people of the fire comprise every violent, cruel arrogant person.” (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 78, Number 651, made available on www.sunnah.com). With regards to servitude, it is reported by Narrated Al-Aswad: “I asked `Aisha what did the Prophet (ﷺ) use to do at home?” She replied. ‘He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was time for the prayer, he would get up for prayer.’” (Ibid, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 65).

However, our author Matthew, does make some significant changes to Mark’s version, the first is that in Mark’s version of the above story, the disciples were secretly discussing the topic, and when Jesus asks them what they were talking about, for some odd reason they don’t answer. Jesus then (perhaps supernaturally) figures out what they were talking about and then gives them the answer to what they were discussing amongst themselves. In Matthew’s version, the disciples are braver and ask Jesus directly.

A child appears out of nowhere just like in Mark’s story, but the teaching of Jesus is expanded significantly in Matthew as compared to that of Mark. The disciples are warned that they must be *like* children to enter the kingdom of God. But how is an adult to become like a child again? Numerous interpretations have been given throughout the ages, commentators often looking for certain characteristics of a child, which should be emulated, such as: innocence, simplicity and gentleness to name a few. They are often described as obedient to parents, in a blind fashion; trusting and believing much without question. They are free from personal pursuits and desires, such as vanity, lust and arrogance etc.

Yet, it is worthwhile delving into the historical interpretation of the verse, and thus glancing at the historical viewpoint of children in Jesus’ time. In antiquity, children were often seen as incomplete human beings, due to their size and mental abilities. It is no wonder that the Greek words for child *παῖς* (*país*) and *παιδίον* (*paídon*) also mean *slave* or *servant*. Thus with this in mind, the disciples are to be like children: insignificant and without power; being ever dependent on their provider, God. This is further supported by verse 4 where the child is described as being humble.

[651]

This verse is the same as 9:37 in Mark, which was about children (unimportant or insignificant people) should be admitted into the community. Or another possible interpretation could be the abolishment of infanticide, which was common among the Romans and Greeks in order to control the size of their families (Josephus, Ap. 2:24:202).

[652] This passage in Matthew is actually a summary of Mark 9:41-50, those nine verses are condensed into just three in Matthew. See commentary under those verses for a fuller and more complete explanation. Readers may rightfully be a little confused over what exactly Jesus spoke; did he speak in length about the Temptations as Mark outlines, or did he give a short summary as Matthew does? He didn’t say both, since the context of Matthew and Mark are the same. It simply shows the inconsistency of the accounts.

[653] **Textual Variant**

This verse is included in the Codex Bezae and other late manuscripts, while it is omitted by the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. It may well have been copied from Luke 19:10, and added to Matthew by some later scribes (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.158).

[654] Jesus continues speaking of the young believers who have joined the Church. Matthew has Jesus warn the people (the Matthean Church) not to despise the new converts. The second part of verse 10 is interesting and for the first time speaks of individual guardian angels, who will in turn protect the young converts.

Verses 12 and 13 speak of a parable about a **lost** sheep, the children/young converts spoken of in verse 10 now are the sheep, or rather the one sheep which gets lost, which symbolises the loss of faith or belief of the new convert. The shepherd will drop everything to go in search of this lost sheep, in like manner will God go out of His way to bring

back this lost convert. The beginning of verse 13 emphasises the uncertainty of whether the shepherd/God will find or bring back the lost sheep/new convert, but once they are brought back, God's joy exceeds that of having a complete flock/church of believers.

The Prophet of Islam gave a similar parable:

Nu'man b. Bashir reported:

"Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a believing servant than of a person who set out on a journey with a provision of food and drink on the back of his camel. He went on until he came to a waterless desert and he felt like sleeping. So he got down under the shade of a tree and was overcome by sleep and his camel ran away. As he got up he tried to see (the camel) standing upon a mound, but did not find it. He then got upon the other mound, but could not see anything. He then climbed upon the third mound but did not see anything until he came back to the place where he had been previously. And as he was sitting (in utter disappointment) there came to him the camel, till that (camel) placed its nose string in his hand. Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than the person who found (his lost camel) in this very state." (Sahih Muslim, Book 37, Number 6616, made available by www.sunnah.com).

[655] After the parable of the lost sheep, Matthew has Jesus instruct his disciples on how to deal with a sinning member of the Church. It should come as no surprise that neither of the other gospels recorded the above saying, since all three of the other authors of the gospels were Gentiles themselves and as explained below, the passage is very anti-Gentile.

If a **brother** in the Church sins against another, the latter is to take him aside and explain the fault he has committed. If he listens and obeys the one wronged, then the latter has **gained** or won him over and all will be well. To discuss the matter privately with your brother who is in error is the first step to bring him back to the right path. Presumably, the emphasis on private discussion would be to avoid embarrassing him by exposing his faults.

If the erring brother does not listen to him privately, then the one wronged is to go with a group or two or three and reproach him. This is now entering legalistic boundaries and may stem from Deuteronomy 19:15: "A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offence that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained." The witnesses to be present are not there to witness his fault, but rather they are to witness the conversation.

If he still refuses to mend his ways then the member who is wronged is to take the brother to the Church, who will decide what to do with him. This is a final resort only, after realising that nothing else can change the man from sinning.

Such a teaching is echoed in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

"Let no man address his companion with anger, or ill-temper, or obduracy, or with envy by the spirit of wickedness. Let him not hate him because of his uncircumcised heart, but let him rebuke him on the very same day lest he incur guilt because of him. And furthermore, let no man accuse his companion before the Congregation without having admonished him in the presence of witnesses" (Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea scrolls in English*, 1998, The Community Rule, 1QS, 5:25 – 6:1).

Finally, if the brother still does not mend his ways and persists in his wrongful actions, he is to be excommunicated from the Church. No Christian is permitted to remain friends or even speak to him; he is to be cast out and removed from the Church. The latter are to treat him like they would a Gentile and a tax-collector. The fact that Matthew's Church

would treat the sinning and excommunicated person as a **Gentile** is very important to understand the view of the author, which in fact may well go back to Jesus himself. It shows that the Church had no dealings with Gentiles, for a sinning person is removed and is to be treated *like a Gentile*. Therefore, to argue that the Church consisted of many Gentiles directly contradicts the above instruction. If the saying originated from Jesus, and I see no reason why it would not have, then it would show that to enter into his community, his Church, one would have to abandon the ways of the Gentiles and convert to Judaism, in essence be a Gentile no more. As already mentioned, this is opposed to the ideas of Paul, who freely admitted Gentiles into the Church without them converting to Judaism.

[656] This verse implies that whatever the disciples/the Church decide here in this world will also have an effect in the next. Thus, if they choose to **release/forgive** a sinner here, God will also forgive the sinner, and if they choose not to forgive and cast that member out (as in the above metaphor '**to bind them**'), the effect will also carry through to the hereafter. In essence, Jesus is giving a vast amount of authority to the Church in the above saying.

[657] Following on from reproving one's brother, Jesus now turns to prayer. The teachings are similar to the Islamic concept of praying in a congregation, where Muslims are encouraged to pray together in groups, Jesus also encourages it; where two or three are gathered, he promises that he, too, will be in their midst. This is not to be understood literally, since Jesus was often not around his disciples and had long since passed away.

[658] After the warning and threat of ex-communication, Peter asks Jesus about forgiveness; his question should again not be interpreted literally, since the number **seven** itself is a number of perfection. Thus the question is more like: 'Am I expected to forgive perfectly?' The answer given by Jesus, that he is to forgive **seventy times seven**, in fact surpasses what Peter was expecting, i.e. there is no real limit to one's forgiveness. The Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave similar teachings in this respect: Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: Messenger of Allah! how often shall I forgive a servant? He gave no reply, so the man repeated what he had said, but he still kept silence. When he asked a third time, he replied: Forgive him seventy times daily." (Sunan Abi Dawud 5164, made available by www.sunnah.com)

[659] After speaking on reconciliation and forgiveness, Jesus teaches an important lesson in a form of a parable. The concept of a **King** is often used as a metaphor in Jewish literature to refer to God. The King wished to settle his account, referring to the idea of judgement at the end of days. The first servant owes **ten thousand talents**, which is a colossal sum of money as one talent is equivalent to 10,000 denarii and one denarius is a day's wage for a worker. If we convert that to the modern day, where a labourer may earn around £100/day, the first servant would owe approximately 10 billion pounds!

He is unable to pay the money back to the King, but begs for mercy and is given it. In turn, he meets one of his fellow servants who owes a measly one hundred denarii, a fraction of a percent of what the former servant owed the King. The fellow servant begs the other, with the same words he used with the King, but he refuses to forgive and imprisons him. The co-workers of the imprisoned servant complain to the King who then severely punishes the wrongdoer; he, too, is thrown into prison and tortured. The custom of torturing debtors was done to encourage family members to gather together and pay the debtor's debt.

The moral lesson of the parable is about the forgiveness of God and the forgiveness of men. The former servant stands before God with a colossal amount of sin on his account, but He forgives the servant when the latter repents, showing what an immense amount of mercy God has for His servants. In turn, the servant meets a fellow servant, but refuses to forgive the minor sins/wrongdoings he commits on the former. This shows the inequity man has for his fellow human beings compared to how far God will go in forgiving His people.

It's worthwhile to note that the above does not portray the Christian god at all, since the **King** *forgives* the servant what is due, the King does not demand money from someone

else, or confiscate his own son's money like the Christian god does. Nor does the King himself pay the money. Rather, much like Allah, the God of Islam, the King's forgiveness means complete forgiveness, the debt was wiped clean and no one had to suffer accordingly, nor any blood had to be shed.

[660] The above is the second instance where Matthew records Jesus speaking about **divorce**, and it is this version which is taken from the Markan version in Mark 10:2-12, the setting and context being the same as in Mark.

From the text, just like in Mark, it is uncertain why the **Pharisees** were **testing** by asking Jesus if divorce is permitted. Perhaps they wished to know which school of thought Jesus sided with when it came to divorce; the Shammai school of thought permitted a man to divorce one's wife if she committed adultery. But the Hillel school of thought had relaxed the ruling and permitted divorce even on trivial matters, such as the wife's cooking. However it is still uncertain how this was a test; it is likely that Mark himself thought any question by the Pharisees was a test, and therefore felt his readers should know as well; Matthew just copied Mark.

However, Matthew makes some changes to the text of Mark; the first in the very question posed by the Pharisees to Jesus, whilst in Mark they simply ask Jesus if it is permitted to divorce one's wife; in Matthew they add **for any reason**. This is important since it allows Matthew to have Jesus give the same answer as Jesus does in Mark and Luke, yet at the same time disagreeing with the other gospels.

[661] Jesus quotes Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 respectively to show that in the Garden of Eden, God made man and woman for the purpose of uniting.

[662] The dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees is similar to Mark's version. However, in the above, Jesus does not go against the Law of Moses as he does so in Mark and Luke, but rather Jesus is interpreting it. When the Pharisees quote Deut 24:1 to him, Jesus provides his own interpretation; that yes, divorce is permitted but only under the extreme case of adultery and not **for any reason**. He cites Genesis 2:24 to prove his point, illustrating the strong and powerful bond of marriage.

There is a slight problem with Jesus' instruction though, for according to the Torah, if a woman or man committed adultery, they would have been executed (Lev 20:10), so how can one divorce someone who is dead? Did that mean that Jesus went against the Old Testament? It may have been the case, that Jesus simply re-interpreted it, seeing those who committed adultery as spiritually dead. Furthermore, the Jews were not permitted to execute adulterers under Roman Law.

[663] From verse 10, the Pharisees who questioned Jesus on marriage seemed to have disappeared and Jesus is now talking to his disciples. After speaking so highly on marriage, the comment made by the disciples, to live single lives seems highly inappropriate. It may be due to the strictness of Jesus and the prohibition of divorce that stirred some to think that it would be easier to remain single all their lives. Jesus replies that only those who readily accept the teachings, with an open heart and mind are able to follow it properly.

[664] This verse is odd and difficult to interpret; a **eunuch** is one who has been castrated, normally a man without any genitalia. Jesus mentions three types of eunuchs: the first are those who were born like that; the second are those who were made eunuchs by men (in certain cults priests were castrated, and in other cases it served as a punishment for prisoners and criminals); and the third are those who had done so for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The last group are not mentioned or heard of anywhere in the gospel narratives, and as such may in fact be better interpreted allegorically, referring to those people and disciples who remained with Jesus, being on the road and thus were not able to marry. They would not be eunuchs in the traditional sense, but could be described as such since they remained unmarried and only focused on Jesus' teachings and preaching his message, which may have brought about criticism from their opponents. Jesus is commending their sacrifices.

[665] **Children** are then brought to Jesus in order for him to bless them, but his disciples act like gatekeepers who begin to tell off the children and parents and keep them away from Jesus. However, the latter in turn instructs the disciples to leave them alone and permit them to come to him. For in these, his disciples can learn an important lesson; that one should become like a child to enter the **kingdom of Heaven**. This saying has caused much debate among interpreters. How is one to be like a child? In what way should they imitate a child to enter the kingdom of God? There are two possible and most likely ways: that of complete reliance on God, as a child has complete reliance on their parents; or that one should be content with what one has, much like children are content.

[666] After blessing the children, Jesus is confronted by a man who asks him about salvation. The above text is actually from the Gospel of Mark 10:17-22 which our author Matthew copies. However, Matthew makes a number of changes which we'll go through.

In Mark 10:17, the questioner refers to Jesus as 'good teacher', Jesus objects to it and tells the man off. Matthew though omits the 'good' from the questioners mouth, but oddly enough, still has Jesus rebuke him as though he did, or at least rebukes the man for asking what *good* thing he must do to inherit eternal life. The admonition of Jesus in verse 17 makes little sense, and may point to a bit of a blunder by Matthew who simply copied the text from Mark without realising that he was making the mistake. Jesus then answers the man's question: How must one **inherit eternal life**? Jesus tells him straight; **keep the commandments**, that is keep the Law.

[667] When asked which **commandment**, Jesus proceeds to list a few of them. It is not completely clear what the term commandments entailed, whether it was just the Ten Commandments, or all of the commandments listed in the Old Testament. The list provided by Jesus does not help either: the first about not killing comes from Exod 30:13/Deut 5:17 which is part of the Ten Commandments; the second about adultery is also part of the Ten Commandments from Exod 20:14/Deut 5:18; as are the third and fourth commandments about stealing and bearing false witness, which are in Exod 20:15, 16/Deut 5:19, 20. The fifth commandment about honouring your father and mother may be considered to be part of the Ten Commandments in Exod 20:12/Deut 5:16. The final about **loving your neighbour** is from Lev 19:18.

All the above are traced to the Old Testament, most of which are the ten commandments themselves, but not all, thus showing that Jesus had in mind more than just the Ten Commandments, and most likely the entire Old Testament Laws, or at least those which he felt were divinely ordained.

It would be interesting to carry out the same test today; if the very same question was posed to the many orthodox Christians today, what would they say in reply? No doubt it would be exactly what Paul would say; that to attain salvation, one is to believe in Jesus' divinity and his sacrifice for the sins of mankind. However, when the question was posed to Jesus himself, he provided a completely different answer; that one should follow the Old Testament.

[668] The man informs Jesus that he already follows the commandments, but seeks more. This, too, serves a blow to the absurd opinion held by some Christians that no one is able to follow the Law, and it was for this reason that God sent Jesus to do away with the Law. The above man is an example of a person living in the time of Jesus who was able to follow the Law; he had done so from his youth.

Some may argue that he was lying, or only deceiving himself; however, if the man was why then would Jesus love him as Mark 10:21 states? Interestingly Matthew omits this. Why would Jesus love a liar or a deceiver? If no one could possibly obey the Law, surely Jesus would have known that and called out the man for lying.

[669] Seeing and not doubting the man's ability to follow the Old Testament commandments, Jesus wishes him to be perfect. In order to do this, one has to be completely devoted to God, and during the time of Jesus, the method of doing this was to join his community; one was to sell all his possessions and give them over to the poor or Jesus' community and then follow Jesus and obey his instructions. This was the road to perfection, and was the road to perfection at the time of the prophets. Often followers of

prophets would abandon much of their previous lives and devote themselves to the services of them to gain as much as possible from them. Jesus was instructing the young man to do the same, much like his disciples had done.

With regards to the possible meanings of **the poor**, see under Mark 10:22.

[670] The context and text of Matthew is the same as in Mark 10:23-30, and the text is very similar showing that Matthew was using the text of Mark. Jesus is amazed at the rich man's attachment to his wealth, for he had shown such promise, but when the advice was given against his wealth, he shrank away and left Jesus. The latter then warns his disciples of the dangers of wealth.

[671] Jesus then moves onto a visual illustration of the difficulty for the rich to enter heaven. The phrase about a **camel going through the eye of a needle** was likely to have been revelation from God, since it is repeated in the Holy Quran but with a slightly different context:

"Verily, those who rejected our signs and showed arrogance towards them, the gates of heaven will not be opened to them nor will they enter Paradise until a camel passes through an eye of a needle..." (7:41).

[672] Who can thus be saved? Jesus answers that with human judgement; no one can be saved, for all men will then deserve to be punished and destroyed, but with the judgement of God, anything is possible. In essence, Jesus is speaking of the grace of God, that even the most persistent sinner can be saved. A similar saying is recorded in the Holy Quran:

"And if Allah were to seize mankind for their wrongdoing, He would not leave on it (the earth) a living creature, but He gives them respite till an appointed term, and when their term comes, neither can they delay it an hour nor can they advance it." (16: 62).

[673] The response of the rich young man is in complete contrast to the call of the first disciples according to the gospels, particularly Peter, who when called dropped everything and followed Jesus. This is further pointed out when Peter complains about his and his fellow disciples' position, all of whom dropped everything in their lives to follow Jesus.

[674] As already pointed out above, the entire passage was copied from the Gospel of Mark, however, this verse (28) is an addition. In the Messianic age, Jesus will be sitting on the throne in his glory, and so will the disciples, all twelve of them! These twelve will then judge the twelve tribes of Israel. It is not certain whether Matthew made a blunder and forgot about the betrayal of Judas and thus perhaps should have spoken of eleven disciples sitting on eleven thrones. However, it is more likely that twelve was used for rhetorical purposes, as twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones to judge twelve tribes sounds a lot better than eleven.

It is uncertain now what Jesus exactly spoke; if he spoke about the Messianic age and the twelve disciples judging the people, why does Mark omit it? The answer may lie in the opinions of the two authors, Mark being a Gentile, perhaps sought to omit the above due to the extreme Jewishness. If the twelve tribes are judged by the twelve disciples, what of the other people who are not part of the twelve tribes of Israel, like himself? However, Luke (a Gentile) does retain the saying, albeit in a different setting, which may actually be due to the saying being the Q source and perhaps unknown to Mark.

[675] Matthew has Jesus speak the words in relation to the rich and poor. In contrast to the common understanding that the rich are blessed by God and the poor are not, Jesus

has turned it upon its head and says the opposite, that it is the poor who are blessed and will enter the Kingdom of God whilst the rich will not.

Jesus probably did speak these words, but whether it was in the above context is uncertain, since the saying does not seem to fit well with the rich and poor context Matthew places it in. It is likely that our author simply copied his source (the Gospel of Mark), however, he has Jesus repeat the saying later in 20:16 which seems to make more sense.

[676] The above parable immediately begins with an introduction of a **householder**, most likely an owner of a farm, who goes out early in the morning to find some labourers. Such was the custom in those days, where often farm owners would hire day workers rather than full-time workers or slaves. The benefit being that the owner would not lose any money when the worker fell ill or even died.

[677]

A **denarius** was often the daily wage for a labourer; such an amount would enable him to buy at least ten small, flat loaves of bread for himself and his family.

[678]

The owner hires the first set of labourers at dawn and then he goes out again in the third hour; that being around 9am where he finds more labourers idly standing around in the market place.

[679] Up to this point, the readers are not surprised, since hiring labourers at dawn and 9am would not be entirely unusual. But when the owner goes out a third and fourth time, around noon and then 3pm to hire more labourers to work for the day it is a bit awkward since obviously they would work just a few hours and yet receive a full day's wage.

[680] **Textual Variant**

The WEB adds further words at the end of the verse: *and you will receive whatever is right*. These words seem to be present in the Received Text from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, they are absent from more modern Bible editions such as the RSV. Hence I have omitted them.

Commentary

If noon and 3pm were late, the narrator has the owner go out almost at the end of the working day to hire some more people at around 5pm.

[681] **Important Words**

κύριος (*kurios*) – Noun, dative plural, masculine of κύριος (*kurios*) meaning *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house. Also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from 14 years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The word (much like in English) is also applied to God. Many Christians will make the mistake to assume that all references of *lord* immediately refer to God and thus when Jesus is called *lord*, he is now synonymous with God, but as explained in the meaning of the word, this is clearly not the case. Jesus himself uses the word when speaking about the master of a house (Matt 24:45). Furthermore in the Genesis Apocryphon, found in the Dead Sea caves, Noah's father Lamech, is addressed by his wife: 'Oh my brother, Oh my Lord!' (1QapGen 2:9).

[682] As expected, at the end of the day, each labourer is paid his dues. The owner of the vineyard has all of a sudden become **lord** of the vineyard, thus encouraging the readers to relate the parable back to God and the rewards God will give to His people on the Day of Judgement. Quite surprisingly, all the labourers are paid the same amount, which includes those working from dawn till dusk and those who worked just an hour; each was paid the same.

[683] After receiving their wages, those who came first naturally grumble and complain to the owner that they, having worked for the whole day, deserve more than those who worked just an hour. To this, the owner argues that he has done them no wrong, that he upheld the initial agreement that they would receive one denarius for their work. His second point is that it is his property and wealth and he is able to do whatever he wishes with it. What is it to them? In the end, he tells them to take what is given to them and go home.

The lesson of the parable is grace; it speaks of God's grace. The labourers are people of the world who labour and work for God, but at the end of the day, it is entirely up to God how He is to treat them; how He rewards them. To some, it may be seen as injustice as from the outset certain people may work very hard to please God, yet it is only God who knows what is truly in their hearts and what their intentions are/were. It should be kept in mind that God is not unjust, just as the owner of the vineyard was not unjust to his labourers.

It is not certain whether the above parable is an authentic saying of Jesus. The overall message seems to be relatively Pauline in nature; the idea that it is purely God's grace that matters and one's work is irrelevant. Yet, on the other hand, God's grace is crucial and the concept that without it, one is lost and doomed is also Islamic; the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said: "Observe moderation in deeds (and if it is not possible, try to be near moderation) and understand that none amongst you can attain salvation because of his deeds alone. They said: Allah's Messenger, not even you? Thereupon he said: Not even I, but that Allah should wrap me in His Mercy and Grace." (Sahih Muslim, Book 39, Number 6765, made available by www.sunnah.com). With this in mind, the Parable may well have originated from Jesus.

[684] Textual Variant

The WEB adds further words at the end of the verse: *For many are called, but few are chosen*. These words seem to be present in the Received Text from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, they are absent from more modern Bible editions such as the RSV. Hence I have omitted them.

Commentary

Jesus seems to repeat himself here, as he said the same thing after his discussion with the Rich young man in 19:30. The above is most likely the correct context.

[685] For details on the alleged resurrection prophecy see under [Mark 8:31-33](#).

[686] The above text is actually from the Gospel of [Mark 10:35-45](#), but our author Matthew makes one interesting modification. For a complete commentary of the passage, see notes in the Gospel of Mark.

The change is that in the Gospel of Mark, it was the two sons of Zebedee who ask Jesus the question. In Matthew above, this has been changed to the mother instead. Which one is correct? Who asks Jesus: the brothers according to Mark, or his mother according to Matthew? The two cannot be reconciled and it is likely that Matthew modified the text of Mark and introduced the mother into the event to soften the harsh reply of Jesus to the two brothers. The mother also disappears from the scene after the above and later in verse 22 Jesus speaks directly to the sons rather than the mother.

[687]

Important Words

ἔθνη (ethnōn) – Noun, dative plural, neuter of ἔθνος (ethnos) meaning: *Nation; people; often used to designate non-Jews; Gentiles; foreigners* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical*

Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000). The WEB translates the above word as *nations*, however, in the context the translation by the RSV (**Gentiles**) is more accurate.

[688] Matthew appears to have a doublet; attentive readers will notice the stark similarity between the above and Matthew 9:27-31, which also has two blind men crying out the same thing as the above.

[689]

The title **son of David** was one of the Messiah titles, first used in the Psalms of Solomon (first Century BCE). The earthly Davidic Messiah was to be a descendant of Prophet David (2 Samuel 7:14-16).

[690] As already noted, Matthew repeats the healing of the two blind men. Some Christians will argue that the above two accounts in Matthew are not doublets, but two separate instances where Jesus heals two blind men. However, the similarities of the accounts are too many for them to be separate. In both accounts, it is two blind men; in both they cry out the same phrase; Jesus heals both in the same way (by touching their eyes); and in both it is their faith which actually makes them better.

We can go even further in that there are in fact three different accounts of the above story, the first is in Mark 10:46-52 where Jesus meets one blind man who cries out “Son of David, pity me!”, Jesus asks what he wants, and he asks to see again, which Jesus subsequently grants him. The second one is in Matthew where this time Jesus meets two blind men who cry out the same thing, Jesus again enquires from them and heals them. And now we have the above account.

Are we really to believe that the same thing happened three times as the gospels record? More likely it was one tradition which was heard by our authors in different forms and they recorded it as they had heard it. In doing so, they create three different stories of the same event.

[691] The above text is actually from the Gospel of Mark 11:1-11, but Matthew makes numerous modifications as will be explained. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem follows his curing of the two blind men (one blind man in Mark’s Gospel). He does not enter Jerusalem at this point, but rather stops just before the city at a village called **Bethphage** (in Mark’s Gospel, he stops at Bethany as well) which lay east of Jerusalem. The mention of the **Mount of Olives** is interesting and may have some symbolic meaning behind it. It is prophesied in the Old Testament book of Zechariah, in Chapter 14 that nations will gather and wage war on Jerusalem; initially they will be successful but then the coming of the Divine Warrior will turn the tables. The appearance of this Warrior will be on the **Mount of Olives**.

[692] Jesus stops and sends two of his disciples into Bethphage. According to the above text, Jesus predicts that they will **straightway** see a tied-up **ass** and a **colt** (which is a donkey less than four years old), which they are to bring back. In verse 3, the disciples are instructed that if anyone challenges them, they are to reply that the donkey and colt’s lord is in need of it and will bring it back.

Verse 3 could be translated in two different ways; the first is done by the WEB as above, the second could be *their Lord has a need*. If the latter, it could imply that the donkey and colt may have belonged to Jesus, or that it belonged to a follower of Jesus, as it would be very unlikely that the owners or villagers would permit foreigners to enter their village and take their animals.

This in fact makes more sense and is more believable: that Jesus had followers in the village with whom he had a prior arrangement about borrowing an animal to ride into Jerusalem. With this in mind, the reply of the disciples to any challenger would make perfect sense; the disciples would explain that Jesus was in need of it, and the owners would have then permitted the taking of the donkey and colt, since the arrangement would have already been agreed upon.

The text makes it very clear that Jesus did not wish to walk into Jerusalem, but rather ride an animal. This was relatively common in the first century, where the rich would enter Jerusalem riding on donkeys to publicise their higher statuses. Thus the entry of a religious leader on a donkey would come as no surprise. Since it was Jesus' intention to proclaim his Messiah status publicly in Jerusalem during the Passover, his entering in such a fashion would have been expected.

As already explained, the source of Matthew is Mark's Gospel, but he makes slight modification to the text. The first and most obvious one is the number of animals the disciples are to bring back to Jesus. Whilst in Mark, Jesus instructs them to bring back a young ass, in Matthew Jesus wants two animals, an ass and a colt. The reason for this modification of Mark's text by Matthew will be explained below.

[693] Matthew interrupts his narrative to include this prophecy, this is why our author Matthew modified his source text Mark: Matthew wanted Jesus to literally fulfil the prophecy. The passage in the Hebrew is: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9).

The above verse has often been interpreted Messianically by the Rabbis (Str-B 1.842-44) and would have been interpreted similarly by Matthew, who himself was Jewish. The meaning of riding on an ass and a colt was a sign of humility. However, the author Matthew seems to misunderstand it, making a bit of a mess; having Jesus ride on *both* the ass and the colt in verse 7!

[694] The practice of laying one's garments down in the path of another was a sign of immense respect in ancient times. The practice is spoken of in the Old Testament, where "every man of them took his garment, and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet, and proclaimed, 'Jehu is king'" (2 Kings 9:13). It was also common in Roman traditions: "And when the time of the military service of Cato ended, he was sent away with no blessings, which is common, no praises, but with tears and embraces, the soldiers throwing their garments down for him to walk..." (Plutarch, *Vit. Cato Minor*. 12).

[695] Important Words

The word **Hosanna** derives from two Hebrew words *יָשָׁא* (*Yasha*) meaning *save; deliverance; help* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*), and *אָנָּה* (*anna*) meaning *beseech thee* (Ibid). Thus combined, they formed part of the prayer of David in Psalms 118:25: "*Save us, we beseech thee, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech thee, give us success!*" Mark does not translate the word above in his text; with the above translation in mind, the text would mean: "*Save us, we beseech thee! Blessed be the one coming in the name of the Lord!*"

[696] According to Mark (our author simply copied Mark's Gospel), some of the crowd who were with Jesus went ahead of him and cried about the above, whilst others who were following did the same as well. The cry, as noted in the Important Words section denotes some degree of saving, which was one of the roles of the Messiah. The latter part of the verse also shows that the crowds had the Messiah in mind.

[697] Like the previous chapter, our author Matthew copied from the text of the Gospel of Mark, this time from Mark 11:15-17. For a detailed discussion on the concept of sacrifice and Jesus driving out the **coin-dealers**, see notes under those verses.

[698] The above verse was copied from Mark 11:17, but our author Matthew makes an interesting change: The quotation is slightly different, while in Mark, Jesus says: *Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?*, in Matthew, he says the same thing, but omits the reference to 'all the nations'. Matthew may have

understood the context better, and may not have agreed with its use in Mark. Furthermore, the fact that this gospel was written after the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE would make the Temple less of a place of prayer for *all the nations*.

[699] After throwing out all the traders, Matthew portrays Jesus then calmly preaching and teaching in the Temple, as if nothing had just happened. The crowds, too, seem happy with him and seem to encourage the children to sing praises of him. With regards to the meaning of the word **Hosanna**, see under verse 9 above. The priests complain to Jesus about the crowds and children in the hope that Jesus will silence them; instead Jesus is pleased and quoted Psalms 8:2 to them.

[700] After the Triumphal Entry in Jerusalem, Jesus is a little hungry and approaches a **fig-tree** that he sees in the distance. He desires some of its fruit, but after finding none, he curses it. The account is difficult for many Christians since it portrays Jesus as being rather unreasonable. Perhaps Jesus was used to the Galilean countryside where the climate was less harsh than in Jerusalem, and therefore expected fruit on the fig-tree almost all year round. But this would still not explain the harsh and inappropriate behaviour of cursing the tree. Some Christians have argued that the above is in fact the fig-tree parable in Luke 13:1-9, made literal, yet there are difficulties in this approach as well since the parable in Luke is about patience, which Jesus does not display.

Other Christians have taken the allegorical approach; the above account is linked to the lament of prophet Micah in 7:1: “Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the vintage has been gleaned; there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig which my soul desires.” The lament continues and goes on to complain about the lack of righteous people on the land. In Matthew, prior to the cursing of the fig-tree, Jesus is hailed as the Son of David and welcomed by many Jews, yet the leaders of the Jews all reject him. Thus the fig-tree above would signify the Tree of Jesse; the Jewish people. The lack of fruit shows this lack of faith.

The question still remains: Did Jesus really curse the fig-tree? Based on the allegorical approach above, it seems unlikely that he did. Our author Matthew simply copied the text of Mark, so it is likely that Mark or his own source mixed up or combined a number of different events; Jesus probably did get hungry, approach a fig-tree, but found none and walked away. In another instance, he may well have spoken of a fig-tree, similar to the parable in Luke 13 and cursed those people who lacked faith. Mark or his source probably combined the two events to make the above. Otherwise, the reader will be left with a very poor view of a great prophet of God. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) too questions the authenticity of the above curse and doubts that it ever happened. (*Fountain of Christianity*, p.16)

[701] Matthew continues to copy from the Gospel of Mark 11:19-24, however, the difference is that the tree is withered away the next day in Mark, but **immediately** in the Gospel of Matthew. Our author Matthew probably exaggerated the facts a little.

With regards to Jesus’ reply, he stresses prayer. The readers may recall that Jesus already attributed the exorcism of a demon to prayer (see **Mark 9:29**). He then allegorises the trust and faith one should have in God; he explains that if one was to truly believe, then even mountains would move under their instruction. Naturally this has caused many Christians trouble, those who interpret Jesus’ miracle literally are then asked to be consistent and interpret the above literally as well, and so we should test our Christian friend’s faith; can they command mountains to lift themselves up and cast them into the sea? Of course not.

Another possible interpretation may be that the mountains refer to hard, rock like people who will never budge from their belief. Jesus stresses that you are able to move such mountains with prayer and faith. Such a teaching is echoed in the Quran;

“And WE subjected the mountains and the birds to David to celebrate God's praises with him” (21:80)

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah explained brilliantly that the birds and mountains above mean “that big men (mountains) and highly spiritual men (birds) glorified God and sang Divine praises along with David. And if according to the verse, the mountains and birds were subjected to David there is nothing extraordinary in the mountains and the birds being subject to his control as at several other places in the Quran not only mountains and birds but all other things in the heavens and the earth – the sun, the moon, the stars, the day, and the night, the animals, the birds, the rivers, the seas, the winds, the clouds etc are stated to have been subjected to man” (2:165, 7:55, 22:38 & 45:13-14)”(*The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 4, p.2105).

[702] Matthew, like his source, the Gospel of Mark takes a break in the text to discuss the withered fig-tree, and then returns to the story of returning to the Temple where he is confronted by the priests.

This is the first clash Jesus has with the authorities in Jerusalem; the question is most likely linked to his overturning of the tables in the Temple. The action of course may have caused the authorities to worry due to the fragile nature of the crowds during the festivals; a small disturbance could lead to riots, which would then lead to bloodshed as the Romans would have come down on the crowds severely.

[703] Jesus counters their question about his authority to do **these things**. He asks them about their opinion of John the Baptist. Religious authorities generally are the first to oppose prophets of God. To which, John was no exception, as can be seen in both Matthew (3:7) and Luke (3:7) where they (the Pharisees and Sadducees) met the rough side of John and are called **brood of vipers**. Since the priests decide to play safe and not answer Jesus' question, Jesus in turn refuses to answer theirs and successfully evades them.

[704] In the above, Jesus is in fact addressing the chief priests and elders. The parable is about two sons that a father has, and immediately the readers will be familiar and would expect some sort of contrasting behaviour between the sons. The father approaches the first son and asks him to do some work in the vineyard; he flatly refuses rudely without even providing an explanation, but later has a change of heart and goes and works. The second son is also asked; he replies in the affirmative. Even though the second son agrees to go, in the end he does not. The lesson of the parable being that it is action and not words which gain the favours of God.

Jesus then contrasts the behaviour of the *sinners among the Jews* and the *Pharisees*; the former will go **before** the latter into the **Kingdom of God**, the reason being is that they accepted the teachings of John the Baptist, whilst the latter did not. However, there is a slight problem with the explanation of relating this with the parable just cited by Jesus; in the parable, if the Pharisees were the second son, then they would have accepted John *verbally*, but disbelieved in him. And the sinners would have rejected John verbally but believed in him. This was the lesson of the parable.

It is thus likely that the two events are unrelated and Matthew simply placed them together himself without realising the fact that they have no link to each other. Jesus most likely did say the above parable and the fact that sinners accepted John while the leadership did not, but they would have been in a different context than the above and definitely were not spoken together.

[705] Important Words

κυριος (*kurios*) – Noun, dative plural, masculine of κυριος (*kurios*) meaning *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house. Also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from 14 years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000). The word (much like in English) is also applied to God. Many Christians will make the mistake to assume that all references of *lord* immediately refer to God and thus when Jesus is called *lord*, he is now synonymous with God, but as explained in the meaning of the word, this is clearly not the case. Jesus himself uses the word when speaking about the master of a house (Matt 24:45). Furthermore in the

Genesis Apocryphon, found in the Dead Sea caves, Noah's father Lamech, is addressed by his wife: 'Oh my brother, Oh my Lord!' (1QapGen 2:9).

[706] The above parable Matthew records is in fact, directly from the Gospel of Mark 12:1-12, see under Mark 12:9 for the interpretation of the parable.

[707] Matthew diverges from Mark ever so slightly at this point; where in Mark the audience play no part in the parable, in Matthew it is the audience who answer Jesus' question and tell the readers what the owner of the vineyard will do to the tenants.

[708] The main difference between Mark's and Matthew's texts is the addition of this verse. It resembles the previous prediction spoken by Jesus in 8:11-12 which predicts the expulsion of the Jewish people from the kingdom of God and the entrance of outsiders. As mentioned in the interpretation of Chapter 8 and in the interpretation of Mark 12:9 above, this most likely did originate from Jesus and would refer to the Muslims who came centuries later.

[709] Textual Variant

This verse is missing in numerous ancient manuscripts such as the second century manuscript P¹⁰⁴ and other documents and witnesses such as the Church father Origen. Other later manuscripts such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus contain it. Most scholars believe that it was added to the Gospel of Matthew by a later scribe who copied from Luke 20:18 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.164).

[710] Matthew records the above parable immediately after speaking on The Parable of the Wicked Tenants in the previous chapter, but there appears to be no original link between the two. The fact that the above parable begins with **And he again replied and spoke to them...** shows that it was a separate tradition which Matthew has inserted into his text. The parable is mentioned both in Matthew and Luke, and thus originates from the Q document.

[711] The parable introduces a **king**, who is holding a marriage feast or banquet, which to the Jewish readers would have reminded them of the end of days where God would invite all the righteous who would partake in the Messianic Banquet. The king in the parable would no doubt refer to God, who in the above prepares a feast and sends out his servants to call those who have been invited, but much to the surprise of the servants and probably the readers of the gospels, the people decline and are busy! This is rather surprising since they would have received the initial invite earlier; furthermore, to decline the invite of the king would have been complete madness.

[712] The king responds by sending further servants with a more forceful message; that the meal is ready and to come. But the people respond even worse than before; they beat the servants and even kill some. At this point the readers would probably realise that the story is just that, a story, but may well begin to think of how God sent prophets to the Jewish people in the past, inviting them to Himself, much like the king had done. The reaction of the people in the parable is very similar to the reaction of the Jewish people: they were too busy to listen to the prophets; when more were sent they, too, were rejected; and according to Jewish tradition some were even killed by the people.

[713] After the king's servants are rejected and killed, the king responds as any king would: he sends his soldiers and **destroys** these rebellious people. After doing so, he then informs his servants that the marriage feast is ready. The readers may be wondering how the feast is still ready after the soldiers have destroyed half the city, and how the city could celebrate after their brethren have been killed. This may in fact mean that the other people who are invited in verse 9 are non-Jews/Gentiles. These respond to the king and come to his feast. It is likely that Jesus spoke the above parable, but he himself never had Gentiles in mind when speaking of these other people; Gentiles in the sense understood by Paul and later Christians, but rather, those Gentiles who inherited the kingdom of God much later, around 600 years in the form of Muslims.

[714] The parable does not end with the other guests coming to the feast. The servants above invite *all people*, including the **good** and the **bad**, and all these people turn up at the feast. The king comes at the end, when all the guests have arrived and looks at all his guests and notices that one has no wedding garment on. This should come as no surprise since he was likely called from the streets by the king's servants and probably did not have a wedding garment or at least did not have time to change into one. The readers are therefore forced to understand the action allegorically. The final actions of the king in the parable are about judgement, since his servants invited all into the feast; some of the people were unworthy or bad. These are then seen by the king and bound and thrown out into the outer darkness, i.e. hell.

[715] **Pharisees** and some of the **Herodians** come praising Jesus and admit that he teaches well, even if it offends any person of high standing. Such praise is to encourage Jesus to be freer and open in his teachings, and to not fear anyone. They ask him about **taxes**; whether they should be paid to the Romans or not. The question shows that at the time, there may have been certain groups of Jews who were against paying any tribute to the Romans, particularly the Zealots, who had always wanted to be a separate and independent nation and not under the rule of Rome. As mentioned under **Mark 1:1**, some of the beliefs of the Jews in the first century regarding the Messiah are that he would wage war against the enemies of Israel and free Israel from any foreign rule. Thus, if Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, he may have had some support from the Zealot group who anxiously awaited the coming of the Messiah to fulfil their dreams.

Thus, by asking Jesus this particular question, the Pharisees and Herodians wished to entrap Jesus; if Jesus answered in the affirmative; that one should pay tribute, then he would incur hostility from every patriotic Jew and in particular the Zealots. However, if he declared that it should not be paid, then this would reveal his true colours as a rebel and the Roman authorities would then have arrested him, since the leading Jews were themselves unable to do so.

[716] Important Words

δηνάριον (*denarioun*) – noun accusative singular neuter of δηνάριον (*denarion*) meaning: *denarius, a Roman silver coin equivalent to a labourer's average daily wage* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[717] Jesus seems to have figured out what his questioners were trying to do; the account shows that he was witty and clever enough to beat them at their own game. The reader can visualise him flicking the coin back to the one who gave it to him as he replies, forcing his questioners to decide what belonged to Caesar and what to God. It further shows that Jesus was not a rebel, as some scholars have suggested, since this would have been a perfect opportunity to teach that taxes should no longer be paid to the Romans. It is not clear who marvels at Jesus' response; it may have been the crowds, but they are not mentioned anywhere in this account and thus it may in fact point to the questioners who were sent by their leaders.

[718] The **Sadducees** were another major group or sect among the Jews of the first century, and were often those of the upper class and those in authority. As mentioned above, they did not believe in the resurrection, perhaps due to no explicit mention of it in the Torah.

[719] The Sadducees approach Jesus and pose a question; the style and well-structured format of the question suggests that they may have used this question as an argument against other Jews, such as the Pharisees in their debates. They utilise the text of Deut 25:5, where if brothers live together and one of them dies leaving behind a widow with no children, the widow is not to marry outside her husband's family and one of the husband's brothers is to marry her. Thus the Sadducees ask Jesus an almost impossible question, giving a hypothetical question which would bring to light serious contradictions with belief in the afterlife and the above mentioned Law.

[720] The final two verses seem to have been appended to the above, since Jesus has already given a convincing answer to the Sadducees. He argues that the earlier prophets

are not dead, but rather living, and where else can they be living? Only in the hereafter. Jesus goes on to explain that since God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the *present* tense, that these prophets are still alive and not dead, otherwise God would have said He *was* the God of Abraham. It is a strong argument, but it is doubtful whether such an explanation would have worked on the very literal thinking Sadducees.

[721] After Jesus rebuts the Sadducees, the **Pharisees** who were listening approach Jesus. Like the previous chapter, the passage in Matthew's Gospel is a copy of Mark 12:28-34. But our author Matthew makes a few changes. This verse is the first change: In Mark it was a scribe who came and asked Jesus which is the first commandment. Matthew for some reason or another changes the one scribe to Pharisees who begin to gather, obviously glad that their opponents (the Sadducees) have been silenced.

[722] For some reason or another, the Pharisees send a lawyer over to Jesus, who wishes to test him. Yet his question is difficult to interpret as a test, since he simply asks which is the greatest commandment in the Torah.

[723] In verse 37 Jesus responds to the scribes by citing Deut 6:5; this is part of the Shema prayer recited daily by many Jews. However, unlike the reply in Mark 12:29, Matthew omits the first part of the prayer; "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD;" which Mark retains. Even though the lawyer doesn't ask, Jesus continues by giving the second greatest commandment, he quotes from Leviticus 19:18, which can be interpreted as a form of the Golden Rule (See Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31). Although the commandment states that one should love one's neighbour, the word neighbour would refer to a fellow Israelite. The first quotation establishes the relationship between man and God whilst this second commandment is to establish the relationship between man and his fellow human beings. In agreement with Jesus is Rabbi Akiba of the first century; according to Sipra on Lev 19:18 he states that it is the greatest principle of the Torah.

A very similar concept exists in the Islamic traditions as well; *Huquq-ul-Allah* and *Huquq-ul-Ibad*, *rights of God* and *rights of man* respectively. The first is to fulfil the obligations towards God; such as worship and prayer, while the latter are to fulfil our obligations to fellow human beings; such as kind and just treatment.

[724] Thus far, Jesus' reply is quite similar to the one given in Mark's Gospel; however, Matthew completely omits the reply of the questioner. In Mark the questioner is a pious scribe who after asking the question, agrees with Jesus and is given glad tidings that he is close to the kingdom of God; whereas in Matthew, the questioner has evil intentions and after asking his question (to test Jesus) he disappears from the scene and gives no reply to Jesus' response.

[725] As the Pharisees gathered, Matthew has Jesus ask them the question about the son-ship of the **Messiah**. The Pharisees answer that he will be **David's** son, i.e. his descendant and modelled after David. As mentioned under Mark 1:1, some of the Jews in the first century may have had the belief that the Messiah would be a king modelled on the Kingship of David and as such gave the Messiah the title of 'son of David'. Jesus seems to be questioning this.

[726] Jesus gives his argument; he quotes Psalms 110:1: *The Lord says to my lord...* In Hebrew *Yahweh says to adonai...*; the former being the name of God in Hebrew, whilst the latter can refer to God, but is also a title addressing a superior (Gen 23:6), a king (1 Kings 1:2), or even a husband (Amos 4:1). The second sentence about the enemies is from Psalm 8:6.

The problem is, that Psalm 110 was never interpreted Messianically in the first century. Of all Jewish texts written around the time, none use the Psalm when discussing the Messiah; it appears to be interpreted as such only by Christians, they are the first to utilise the text and argue that it spoke of the Messiah. Therefore, I do not believe that Jesus made the above comment, rather these are the words of either the gospel writer Mark (our Matthew is simply copying the text of Mark 12:35-37) or some other Christian who

has placed it in Jesus' mouth.

However, even if we accept for argument's sake that the above was correct, what is the point being made? That the Messiah could not be a descendant of David, because David calls the Messiah Lord? Is that the point? It's not very convincing, since many children outdo their parents when it comes to piety, wasn't David greater than his father Jesse? Furthermore, the argument is false; for according to Christians, Christ *is* the descendant of David. Thus why the gospel writers place these words in Jesus' mouth is a mystery.

[727] As noted above, our author Matthew is copying the Gospel of Mark. In the previous passage, we noted the differences, and these continue here. Who was Jesus addressing? A scribe (Mark)? Or the Pharisees (Matthew)? Did Jesus complain about the beliefs of the scribes (Mark)? Or did he ask the Pharisees what they think about the Messiah (Matthew)? The two accounts follow on from the same setting and like the previous chapter cannot be reconciled. Although it can and will be argued that the discrepancy is minor, it still exists between the two gospels, and yet Christians will argue that they were both written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore why did the Holy Spirit inspire two authors to write two different stories of the same event?

The answer is relatively simple; the authors were not inspired and like dozens of examples shown in this book, there are discrepancies between the gospels. In the above, Matthew was using the text of Mark, but replaced the scribes with Pharisees and sought to make other modifications as shown above.

[728] Matthew continues with Jesus warning about the scribes and Pharisees, the warning is also present in the Gospel of Mark, however, Matthew records Jesus saying a lot more. If Mark was historically correct, then Matthew has simply made up much of Jesus' discourse above; whereas if Matthew is correct then Mark omitted most of what Jesus spoke above. The only explanation of the discrepancy is that Matthew had another source which he thought best to append to the above Markan text.

[729] Jesus begins his discourse concerning both the **scribes** and the **Pharisees**. He combines them in one unit, not differentiating between them, both being classed as the opponents. As regards **Moses' seat**, there is archaeological evidence showing that a particular 'teaching seat' existed in synagogues (L.Y Rahmani, *Stone Synagogue Chairs: Their Identification, Use and Significance*, *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 2/3 (1990), pp. 192-214, *Published By: Israel Exploration Society*). Here the teachers would often sit facing the audience and teach them the Torah. Scribes and Pharisees would often sit themselves on the seat to teach the people and the accusation above is that they did so to gain recognition.

[730] This is a very difficult verse to interpret, as elsewhere Jesus speaks *against* the interpretations and teachings of the Pharisees (15:1-14, 16:12) but here all of a sudden he is advising his disciples and the crowds to do what they say while they sit on the teaching seat in the synagogues. The answer may lie in the second part of the verse; that the Pharisees are being hypocrites, that they themselves do not do what they preach. In summary, Jesus is basically hinting that it is OK to follow what they say, in general, but not to do what they themselves do, i.e. do not follow in their footsteps and copy their actions.

It is obvious why the other gospels did not record the above teaching; Jesus is actually telling his disciples and crowds to follow the teachings of the Pharisees and scribes; that being the Torah Law. The other gospel authors were Gentiles and did not believe in following the Torah Law any longer, but in the above they are being contradicted by Jesus himself.

[731] This is to be understood metaphorically: that the scribes and Pharisees bind (the readers may have bundles of twigs or other heavy farming activities in mind) burdensome tasks on people yet they themselves do not do any of them. The readers will recall that Jesus' own teaching is *light* (11:30) in contrast to what the Pharisees *do*; making the Law

difficult for people to follow and abide by. It is either the interpretations of the Law or more likely the traditions of the elders which Jesus had in mind; earlier he attacked such traditions and taught against them (15:1-9). It should be made explicitly clear that Jesus is not attacking the Law in any form, for he himself taught and followed the Law throughout his ministry.

[732] From this verse begins another trail of accusations, which in reality contradicts what has been said so far. As yet, the accusations have been about the *actions* of the scribes and Pharisees, in essence that their works are hypocritical and should never be copied. But here, their supposedly good **works** are done only to be seen by men and not done with the right intentions; the reader is reminded of the hypocrites who pray publicly for show (6:5). **Phylacteries** were small strips of parchment which many Jews used to wear; on these parchments were prayers which they often used to recite. The accusation made by Jesus is that these were broadened in order to boast to the general public.

[733] Verses 6 and 7 speak of how they love the best seats in gatherings and seek to be recognised and greeted in the market places. Verses 8 to 10 have a similar message, and the instructions seem to relate more to the Church than to Jesus' small community at the time, hence it is more likely that the above words are of the author rather than of Jesus himself. The first part of each verse is an admonition; the Church leaders are not to be called Rabbis, nor are they to call anyone outside **Rabbi**. They are not to call anyone **Father** either, which was a title used for elders as a title of respect. Nor are they to call anyone **Master**.

Interestingly, the instruction, particularly the one regarding calling anyone *Father* seems to have been ignored by many Christians these days; Roman Catholic priests are often referred to as *Fathers*, which seems to be the main focus of the prohibition in the above quotation put in Jesus' mouth by Matthew. The second part of each of the verses provides the reason for the prohibitions; that the Church only has one Teacher, which is probably Jesus; one Father who is God; and one Master who is Jesus again.

[734] This verse links with the third part of verse 8 and is about equality. The main focus of the prohibitions is to prevent members from adorning themselves and being proud like the opponents of Jesus. None of them are to be called Teachers, Fathers or Masters, rather the whole Church are brothers; equal and are to be **servants** of each other.

[735] The verse above seems to be a separate saying of Jesus, most likely recorded by the source Q, since both Matthew and Luke record the saying, but in different settings and contexts; in Matthew above and in Luke in 18:14. Whoever wishes to exalt themselves, they will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted; either in this life or most likely in the next.

[736] Textual Variant

Verse 14 is included in the Received Text but omitted from Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Bezae along with many other early manuscripts. It seems that it was added by a later Christian scribe to parallel Mark 13:40 and Luke 20:47 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.166).

Commentary

From this verse begins another section or series of attacks on the opponents of Jesus. The Woes in the following verses are not **Woes** of sadness and grief, but rather **Woes** of judgement and condemnation. The scribes and Pharisees with their interpretations of the Law, which emphasise external purity rather than internal are condemned. Since they teach these same doctrines to others, they also close the Kingdom of God to them, as opposed to Peter, to whom the keys of the Kingdom of heaven were given (16:19). Thus the scribes and Pharisees seem to be the opposite of Peter, his anti-type. Those who follow them will face a closed door, while those who follow Peter and his teachings, they will enter the Kingdom of heaven.

[737] The second Woe follows on closely from the first; that scribes and Pharisees would travel great distances to gain one **proselyte** (a convert to Judaism) and once they did so, instead of making him a son of heaven, they would make him a son of hell. There is a severe problem with this saying though, since there is no evidence whatsoever of Pharisees and scribes travelling any distance to gain converts; early Jews were not as active in their preaching efforts as the Christians and had little desire to convert the world to Judaism (Rabbi Reuven Firestone, Jun 12, 2019, *Why Jews Don't Proselytize*, <https://renovatio.zaytuna.edu/article/why-jews-dont-proselytize>). At most, they would have wanted to save some of the God-fearers (those Gentiles who were interested and often attached themselves to Synagogues, but did not go through the whole process of becoming Jews, such as eating kosher food and being circumcised). Thus the above may be taken with a pinch of salt and most likely originated from Matthew himself rather than Jesus.

The essential message however, would have been that they would make great efforts to convert some people, but due to their hypocrisy and poor interpretations, they would make the poor man convert to a state worse than before and turn him into a child of hell rather than heaven.

[738] Oaths in ancient days were common and were often made on almost anything worthy and holy. Small and petty statements were made stronger and more forceful when an oath was applied, such as those in the market place where sellers and buyers may make oaths that they are unable to buy or sell at a lower price. Whilst there is no evidence that the gold of the Temple was made an object of swearing and not the Temple itself, the message however is that the scribes and Pharisees would make petty things objects of worth and holy whilst ignoring the more important objects.

[739] Jesus then refutes the foul practice and ill-guided scribes and Pharisees by stating the obvious, that it is the Temple which makes the gold holy and thus is far more important and worthy than the gold itself.

[740] Verses 18 and 19 are in essence the same as 16 and 17.

[741] In verse 20, Jesus proclaims the obvious, that by swearing on the altar, it includes everything that is on it as well, likewise in the next verse; that by swearing on the Temple, the person is swearing by everything that is in it, including God Himself who dwells in the Temple (thus refuting the absurd allegations made by some Christians that Jesus did away with the Temple). And by swearing by heaven, they swear by God Himself as well. However, a problem arises when reading the above with 5:33-37 where Jesus advises against taking oaths at all; he instructs his disciples and the people not to swear at all, either by heaven or earth. Thus the above may be the words of the author and not Jesus', or the final and important message of the above (if spoken by Jesus) was rather on the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees. Yet, this still does not resolve the apparent contradiction.

[742] **Tithe** is a religious tax paid by the Jews to the authorities; it is much like Zakat, although it is based upon income rather than savings. The attack on the scribes and Pharisees that they focus on the tithe a great deal as opposed to the weightier matters of the Law may be historically proven unlike many of the previous charges. For the Old Testament speaks of only tithing fruits of the field and trees (Lev 27:30), or of grain, seeds, oil and wine (Deut 14:22-23), whilst in the Mishnah (the oral traditions of the Law written much later) tithing is to be done on everything that is harvested and eaten (m. Ma'as 1:1). This points to great effort in fine graining what is to be tithed and what not. However, the weightier matters of the Law, such as justice, faith and mercy were ignored by the religious authorities.

[743] The straining out a **gnat** or mosquito is in reference to filtering wine and other drinks by Jews, often through clothes and other materials to prevent the swallowing of insects swimming in the drinks, which itself could be dangerous and was considered unclean. The scribes and Pharisees were very careful in doing so, but at the same time were

careless on much more important things, and thus are likened to swallowing whole camels, which were also considered as unclean by Jews.

[744] The charge is about inner purity versus outer; the scribes and Pharisees are accused of only being concerned with outer purity, since they themselves are impure on the inside, being full of extortion and excess. To be fully pure, Jesus orders them to be clean both on the inside and the outside; the former being more important than the latter.

[745] This time, the scribes and Pharisees are likened to **whitewashed tombs** which appear beautiful on the outside, but are full of rotten bones on the inside. Thus the scribes and Pharisees too appear beautiful on the outside, but are full of hypocrisy and wickedness on the inside, which is hidden from all viewers.

[746] This is not wholly correct; building a tomb in honour of the previous prophets, particularly those killed in the past would be to condemn the murders, not to condone them. Thus if the scribes and Pharisees did build tombs in honour of the prophets (which there is no evidence that they did) then the reason would have been to condemn their murders, not to admit that they are the sons of the murders which they condone. However, to the readers of the gospel, they may have understood the above differently, perhaps accusing the scribes and Pharisees of hiding their guilt, since they were ultimately the ones responsible for the (supposed) killing of Jesus.

[747] The fate of the scribes and Pharisees is thus sealed, there seems to be no hope for them and they are already condemned to hell.

[748] It seems rather odd that Jesus would speak in the first person; that *he* sends to the Jews prophets and wise people etc. It is likely that Matthew has another source which he appended to the Woes, and the person speaking in these verses is God Himself rather than Jesus. The fact that Jesus pronounces Woes on *scribes* and Pharisees, but then speaks of sending to the **Jews; prophets, wise men** and *scribes*, shows that the context of this saying is completely different from the above written by Matthew.

There is another difficulty; whilst God did send prophets to the Jews, some they may have killed, but never did the Jews crucify any prophets, for crucifixion was a Roman form of execution. It may be a reference to Jesus himself however, which makes sense since it is spoken in the future tense.

[749] Finally, the pronouncement of judgement is made by Jesus, not just to the scribes and Pharisees, but to the entire generation. The author or Jesus would have in mind the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened just a few decades after the crucifixion of Jesus.

[750] Jesus then laments over **Jerusalem**, the cause of the lament being that numerous prophets have been sent to Jerusalem, but she (the city) has never listened to them and has continued to disobey them. In turn their house (the Temple) will become **desolate**, in that God will abandon the Temple and leave the Jewish people.

Verse 39 has often been interpreted to refer to Jesus' second coming; that they would never see him again until he returns. Attentive readers will note that the Woe to the whole of Jerusalem makes little sense in this context. The only time Jesus would have said it was *after* he preached in Jerusalem and *after* the Jews in Jerusalem rejected him. But this has not happened yet. Thus it is likely that, if Jesus spoke the above words, it would have been *after* the crucifixion and his rejection by the people. Whilst leaving the city, it would make perfect sense for him to look back and lament over it.

[751] After the Woes to Jerusalem, Jesus leaves the Temple, and whilst doing so is shown by his disciples the splendid **buildings**, which may indicate that many of the disciples were from the countryside and had little association with urban life. Rather than agreeing and marvelling as well, Jesus turns to them and predicts the destruction of the Temple. The prediction seems to have been fulfilled in 70 CE, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. He states that **there will not be left here one**

stone on another, pointing to complete destruction.

The above prophecy seems accurate and is likely to have been made by Jesus himself. The fact that the prediction was not exactly fulfilled as suggested by the text shows that it is authentic. The words of Jesus show complete destruction, that no one stone will be left on another, yet when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, much of the Temple walls were left standing; many of the surviving stones are large and weigh between two and five tons, but others, especially the corner stones are much larger. Often when prophecies are written after the events unfold, i.e. fake prophecies, they often fit the event exactly, which is not the case with the above one made by Jesus, and thus it is most likely to be authentic. E.P. Sanders made a similar point in his book *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 1995, p.257.

[752] After predicting the destruction of the Temple, the leading disciples approach Jesus privately and ask him when all these things will happen. Rather than providing a time frame or even answering their question, Jesus discusses the end of days. He warns them, beginning with false Messiahs, who will claim such in the near future and lead many people astray. Jesus' prophecy proves true, since Josephus reports of a certain claimant, Simon Bar Kokhba, who claimed to be the Messiah in 132 CE, and who gathered a large following and waged war on the Romans but was soundly defeated. Since then, there has been no shortage of other claimants of the Messiah.

[753] Furthermore, Jesus predicts the rise in the number of wars, earthquakes and famines. It echoes Ezekiel; 'A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in the midst of you; a third part shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them' (5:12).

The Holy Prophet of Islam also predicted the end of days with a number of signs; the coming of the Messiah, the appearance of the smoke (maybe from wars) and insects (diseases) [Sahih Muslim, Book 41, Number 6931].

The time of the Promised Messiah would be when **nation shall rise against nation**, i.e. the number of wars would drastically increase. **Earthquakes** too will increase, or natural disasters and **famines**. Elsewhere, Jesus predicts the darkening of the sun and moon, stars falling from heaven and the very powers of heaven shaking (Mark 13:24-27).

Analysing each point, the increase of wars, it can be argued that the twentieth century saw the most devastating wars in the history of mankind in the form of the two World Wars. The number of earthquakes has increased significantly from the beginning of the twentieth century as well (<https://sos.noaa.gov/datasets/earthquakes-of-the-20th-century/>). As regards the darkening of the sun and moon, this too happened in the end of the nineteenth century to correlate with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), full details are written in the notes under Mark 13:24.

Thus the above all point to the beginning of the twentieth century being the time of the second coming of Jesus, and this is exactly what happened. The coming of the Promised Messiah, *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian* happened just as was prophesied by both Jesus and the Prophet of Islam. He fulfilled the above prophecies along with those presented in the hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

[754] Matthew has produced a doublet; in that he speaks of the same event twice, and it is uncertain why he has done so; this doublet is placed at the very end of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, whilst the first is directly after he commissions the disciples to go out and preach. In the context of Matthew's Gospel, the first warning (Matthew 10) may seem to make sense, since Jesus is dispatching his disciples and giving them a heads up of what they may expect. However, no such record exists of persecution of the disciples *during* the lifetime of Jesus in Judea, implying that either Jesus was incorrect in his warnings in the above context, or more likely that the above was spoken by Jesus much later in his ministry, perhaps even after the crucifixion when Jesus was condemned as a criminal and when the persecution of his community really began.

This implies that Matthew perhaps had access to other traditions about Jesus' warnings to his disciples and thought that he had given the warnings twice in his lifetime in Judea, hence the doublet.

[755] Much of the first doublet is reproduced in this version; however, verse 14 is new and on face value may imply that Jesus said that his gospel must be preached to the whole world. Indeed, the above verse has been used by numerous Christians to argue that Jesus' message was to be preached to the whole world, much like Mark states in 13:10 (Remember, that Matthew is most likely using the text of Mark in this passage as well). However, the sentence has been placed in the future tense by Matthew making it a prediction or command. Matthew has the disciples preach to the whole world as a *testimony* to the nations (a phrase including both Jews and Gentiles). However, what does he mean by testimony? Matthew has used the word *testimony* (*μαρτυριον/marturion*) twice in his gospel:

"And Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, to *testify* to them'" (8:4).

"And you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear *testimony* before them and the Gentiles" (10:18).

In the first passage, it is used as proof; Jesus commands the leper he has just healed to present himself to the priest to prove that he is now clean. The other passage is in the form of a courtroom witness, where the disciples will bear testimony/witness before the Gentiles.

Referring to these two usages of the word in Matthew's Gospel, its primary use is *proof* or a *testimony in a court*. With this in mind, it may be that Matthew has Jesus instruct his disciples that the gospel is to be preached to the whole world as proof to the Gentiles, and as proof that true salvation comes from Israel.

In fact, the Greek text could be translated as *testimony against all the nations*. Thus for argument's sake, if Jesus did say the above, he most likely meant that the disciples are to preach the gospel to all the nations, including any interested Gentiles, but the message is to show that salvation can only be attained through Israel, through following the Torah Law, since this is what Jesus taught throughout the gospels, especially Matthew's Gospel. The author may have had the numerous prophecies in mind, prophecies like in the Book of Isaiah (e.g. Isa 2:1-4) regarding the coming of the nations to Mount Zion in the end of days, and as such he turns this saying of Jesus into a prophecy.

Having said that, I do not believe that Jesus did say the above, and the words are most likely the words of the author Matthew himself; see under [Matthew 28:16-20](#) for a fuller explanation on the scope of Jesus' message according to the author Matthew. Jesus himself never did preach to a Gentile (he may have healed some, but never did he teach them anything); he never invited any Gentile to become his follower (those who asked were turned away, e.g. Mark 5:19); he never entered into a Gentile Temple to preach a message but only went into Synagogues. Therefore, his followers are to imitate him, and if he himself did nothing of the sort, why should his followers? It would be very strange for him to instruct his disciples to preach to Gentiles when he himself never did, even when he had the opportunity. Therefore any verses indicating a global mission are to be viewed as the words of the authors themselves and not Jesus.

[756] The **desolating sacrilege** comes from Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11, where it refers to the pagan altar erected in the Temple in 168 BCE, by Antiochus Epiphanes (Peakes). Matthew our author is copying from the Gospel of [Mark 13:14-20](#). He modifies the text slightly, where Mark spoke of it *standing where it ought not to be*, Matthew speaks of **standing in the holy place**, which means the same thing; the Temple. This may well refer to some kind of prophecy, since at the time of Jesus, there was no pagan altar in the Temple. But the problem is that no altar was placed in the Temple after Jesus, so if it was prophecy, it failed.

It is likely that the author or his source understood when reading the prophecies in Daniel that sometimes in the end of days, a pagan altar or perhaps even the anti-Christ would come and stand at the Temple. Perhaps this idea was added to Jesus' own prophecies concerning the end of days, or the days when Jesus' second coming would occur. It is in those days, that Jesus advises his people that they should flee to the mountains.

[757] Jesus moves onto further advice and cries for pity for those who are caught up in the end of days. For such trials and sins have never occurred from the **beginning of time** and not even the **elect** (chosen ones) of God would have lasted had God not **shortened those days** with the second coming of Jesus. The despair spoken of seems to be far worse than mere wars and famines, which have happened since the beginning of time. What Jesus may be referring to is the trials and trouble caused by the Anti-Christ, or Dajjal in Muslim literature, which even the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sought protection from (Sahih Muslim, Book 004, Number 1216). Such will be those days, that even the most pious of people will get caught up in the lies and deceit of the Anti-Christ.

There are numerous interpretations of the identity of the Anti-Christ, it's not one person, but rather a group of people as explained by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him):

“Dajjal is not the name of one man. According to the Arabic lexicon, Dajjal signifies a group of people who present themselves as trustworthy and pious, but are neither trustworthy nor pious. Rather, everything they say is full of dishonesty and deceit. This characteristic is to be found in the class of Christians known as the clergy. Another group is that of the philosophers and thinkers who are busy trying to assume control of machines, industries and the Divine scheme of things.” (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Essence of Islam*, 2005, Vol 3, p.280)

The Christian clergy were one type of Anti-Christ as explained by the Promised Messiah, for “There have been many Dajjals and there may be more to come.” (Ibid, p.281). There are a number of interpretations of the identity of the Dajjal or Anti-Christ:

1. “If Dajjal is taken to mean someone other than the misguided preachers of Christianity, this would entail a contradiction, because the very hadith which indicate that the Dajjal will prevail over the earth in the latter days, also indicate that in those days the power of the Church will overwhelm all religions. This contradiction can only be solved by affirming that the two are one and the same.” (Ibid p.280)
2. “Today Dajjaliyat is spreading its web like a spider. The disbeliever with his disbelief, the hypocrite with hypocrisy, the alcoholic with his drinking, and the Maulavi with his preaching without practice and with his black heart, are all weaving the net of Dajjaliyat” (Ibid p.284)
3. “It refers the people concerning whom it is written that they would make great inventions in the latter days and will try to interfere with God's creation. According to the commentators [of the Holy Qur'an], the people mentioned here are actually the Dajjal.” (Ibid, p.286)

Thus the Dajjal or Anti-Christ is rather a group of people who cause deceit and confusion around the world, which in the modern times are the Christian nations with their material powers. The destruction of the Dajjal or Anti-Christ as recorded in the hadith is not to be taken literally;

“Remember, it is also written about the Messiah—the bearer of spiritual blessings, whose advent in the latter days has been promised to the Muslims—that he would slay the Promised Dajjal. But it does not mean he will actually kill him with a gun or a sword. What it means is that he will do away with all deceitful innovations in religion.” (Ibid, p.285)

[758] Verses 23-25 are in fact from the Gospel of Mark 13:21-23. Many scholars have argued that the above verses are a doublet of verses 5-6 of the same chapter, which in fact

may be the case, since the message is the same; that of warning of false claimants to the second coming of Jesus (Collins, *Mark: A Commentary, Hermeneia*, 2007, p.613).

[759] Matthew, however, does add three further verses. The reference to the **wilderness** may reflect knowledge of certain claimants later who in fact did lead people into the wilderness, e.g. the Jewish historian Josephus discusses the man known as *the Egyptian* who claimed Prophethood and did exactly that. The reference to the inner rooms may point to him coming from nowhere, as if by magic, both of which Jesus warns his disciples against.

Verse 27 speaks of the second coming of Jesus being likened to lightning, which would refer to the global event or mission of the second coming. This second manifestation of Jesus would no longer be a Jewish prophet for the Jews, but rather a global prophet for all of humanity. The occurrence would come from the east, thus the Messiah would be from there and his influence would spread across the world to the west. *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* is just that Promised Messiah, he came exactly from the east (India) and his teachings have spread all across to the rest of the world. This was in fact a prophecy made by the Promised Messiah, in which it was revealed to him by God: "I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth". Now, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has spread to over 200 countries world-wide, two magnificent prophecies by the two Messiahs.

The final verse speaks of the importance and global impact of the second coming of Jesus, just as eagles or vultures do not miss out on a meal of a corpse, so shall the people not miss out in witnessing and accepting the second coming of Jesus.

[760] All the above was actually copied from the Gospel of Mark 13:24-27. Please see notes under Mark for a full explanation of the second coming of Jesus.

[761] Continuing with the notion of the second coming, Jesus advises his disciples that they will know when it occurs, just like they know that summer is approaching when the leaves of trees sprout.

[762] These two verses are possibly one of the strongest proofs that according to the gospels themselves, Jesus was a man and not God or the son of God as believed by many Christians. In verse 34 Jesus firmly believes that his second coming would be *imminent*; that he would very soon return within the lifetime of his disciples. However, this is clearly incorrect, since Jesus *did not* return within the lifetimes of the disciples. The end of days *did not* happen as the above states, so did Jesus get it wrong?

There are only two options; we believe that Jesus did not say the above and that it was made up by the early Church. The problem with this is, why on earth would the early Church make up a false prophecy? The only possibility is that the above *is* what Jesus thought about his return from the east. Jesus knew full well that the vast majority of the Jewish population were not living in Judea, and since he came for the Jewish people, he knew that he would have to travel outside Judea. Yet he still expected to return to his homeland and family after his travels outside. It would most likely refer to this, when he speaks of his return within their lifetime.

The above must have been a different tradition to the other second coming of Jesus traditions that Mark had access to (note the above was copied from the Gospel of Mark by our author Matthew), and it is likely that Mark simply misunderstood and grouped them all together. Any other interpretation would imply that Jesus was bluntly wrong and mistaken.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explains the two prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus:

“Remember, the Gospels contain two kinds of prophecies about the coming of Jesus:

- i. The promise of his coming in the latter days means his coming in the spiritual sense, like the coming of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah. Like Elijah, he has already appeared in this age and it is I, the writer, a servant of mankind, who has appeared in the name of the Messiah as the Promised Messiah. Jesus has told of my coming in the Gospels, and blessed is he who, out of love for Jesus, considers my claim with justice and fairness, and saves himself from going astray.
- ii. The other prophecies regarding the second coming of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels constitute evidence of his life which continued after the experience of the cross, by the sheer grace of God. It was in accordance with the prophecy that God saved his chosen servant from death on the cross.” (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *Jesus in India*, 2016, p.42)

[763] Textual Variant

Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Bezae and other early manuscripts read as above. But the Received Text (KJV and WEB) omits ‘**neither the son**’. It is also interesting to know that the Codex Sinaiticus has a little bit of a mess regarding this phrase. The original scribe writing in the fourth century wrote in ‘neither the son’, however, this was deleted by a corrector also writing in the fourth century, but then a few centuries later in the seventh century, another scribe came along and put it back in! (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.168).

It is likely that the scribes omitted the words to solve the problem of ‘the son’ not knowing something; after all he is god and what kind of god does not know everything? The fact that the verse ends with *only* also supports the above reading, showing that it is *only* the Father who knows and no one else.

[764] This verse, too, has caused many problems for the Church. It limits the knowledge of Jesus, the son of God, and only gives the knowledge of the **hour** to God. If Jesus is to be God in the flesh, how is it that he is unaware of the coming of the hour? A similar saying is echoed in the Holy Quran, but this time about the hour of the day of resurrection rather than the second coming of Jesus:

“They ask you about the Hour; ‘When its appointed time is?’ Say; ‘Its knowledge is only with my Lord, none can manifest its time but He. It weighs heavy on the heavens and the earth; it shall not come upon you but all of a sudden.’” (7:188).

The above therefore places Jesus on the level of humans and angels; below God and subservient to Him, not His equal in any way shape or form. Because of the difficulty this verse put the Church under, this verse is authentic, much like the expectation of Jesus’ coming within the lifetime of his disciples.

To drive the point even further;

“The above quotation is clear on the point that the Messiah (peace be upon him) denies fore-knowledge of the future while such knowledge is the attribute of God the Great. When therefore the Messiah says that he has no knowledge of the hidden and no knowledge of the future events, he admits in other words that his use of the expression Son of God in respect of himself is not in its literal sense, but in a metaphoric sense; that is to say all that he means thereby is that he is a favourite of God.” (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Did Jesus Redeem Mankind?* 1960, p.105)

[765] The second coming’s urgency and suddenness is this time likened to the flood of **Noah**. Just before the flood, the people of Noah went about their daily business; they ate, drank, married and did all the normal things, but all of a sudden, the flood came and carried them away. Likewise, in the second coming of Jesus, the people will not necessarily expect it, they will carry on with their normal business, but then all of a sudden he will come.

There are two ways to interpret the above sayings; the first is that Jesus is speaking of his second coming in glory, on the clouds, to judge the people and that this will happen all of a sudden and the readers are warned to be on their guard. However, it has already been argued that it is not really the case, and that Jesus' coming should be interpreted allegorically; see previous chapter for more details. The other interpretation could be that Jesus is speaking of his return from the east, from the other tribes, within his own lifetime; then the message is about alertness. The readers will be reminded of the saying in Matthew 24:42-51: Watchfulness and Faithfulness, where Jesus warns his community to stay alert; the same may be the case here.

[766] Verse 31 of the same chapter speaks of the son of man coming in the clouds and gathering the elect (see Matthew 24: 29-31). Whilst father and son, and mother and daughter will be working, one of the pair will be taken leaving behind the other, who will no doubt end in destruction.

[767] Matthew is copying from the Gospel of Mark 13:33-37. This entire passage is about the second coming of Jesus and of keeping awake and alert regarding the timing of the event. Verse 42 indicates that no one knows when the second coming of Jesus will take place; earlier, in verse 36, Jesus speaks of only God the Father knowing when it will take place. Returning to verse 42, the latter part also goes against any kind of calculation or attempt to pinpoint a particular date for when Jesus will return; something numerous Christian groups have attempted in recent years.

[768] While Matthew's account follows Mark, where Jesus again speaks of his second coming, he begins like Mark, but then moves on to another tradition which seems to originate from Q since Luke writes a similar account. It begins with a householder who is aware of when a burglar is going to break into his house; he will stay up and be completely alert and attentive to ensure that he is not caught off guard. Likewise should the disciples be alert and keep watch for when Jesus is to return.

[769] Verse 45 then begins a new tradition, the reader is thus able to place themselves in the position of the man's servants. One waits and performs his duties well and will be lucky and blessed if the head of the household returns and finds him in such a position and situation. On the other hand, the bad servant is he who thinks that the head of the household will come later and begins to treat his fellow servants badly, beating them, eating and drinking. When the head of the household suddenly comes back and finds him in such a state, he will in turn beat him severely. The Greek verb used literally means to cut down; a cruel method to kill ones enemies or slaves. So, the end of such a bad servant would undoubtedly be death, but not just any, but a cruel and harsh one.

[770] Matthew now moves on to explaining how the coming Kingdom of Heaven will be when Jesus returns. The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to **ten virgins** who went to meet the bridegroom. Immediately the readers will think of Jesus when they read/hear of the bridegroom, since already Jesus has been described as such in 9:15.

[771] The ten virgins are introduced at this point, five of which are described as **foolish** or literally stupid, whilst the others are described as **wise** or smart. These are going out to meet the bridegroom, i.e. Jesus, which the readers themselves would have desired when Jesus' second coming occurs. But as will be told later in the parable, many of the virgins are not prepared.

[772] The bridegroom is delayed, no reason is given, which makes sense since Jesus has already informed the people that no one knows the hour of his second coming but God. In the delay, the virgins fall asleep, only to be awakened by the announcement that the bridegroom has arrived. Those who are prepared quickly get up and light their lamps.

[773] As the bridegroom approaches to meet everyone, the foolish virgins would be standing there with no lamps in the dark; looking rather silly. So they turn to the wise ones and ask for some oil, but there is not enough to share. This may point to the fact that all will be on their own in the time of the second coming, responsible for themselves. The

virgins are thus told to go and buy oil from the sellers.

[774] By the time the foolish virgins return with their oil, it is too late. The bridegroom has passed by them and gone in with the guests and the door is shut. They cry out to the bridegroom, addressing him as **lord** which is not a method for addressing a bridegroom, but rather is a form of address to Jesus. He in turn begins his reply with **Most Certainly** or verily, again a typical Jesus formula and announces that he does not know them, similar to the reply given in 7:23. The parable ends with the warning for alertness.

[775] Chapter 25 in Matthew consists mainly of parables. The above is from the Q source since both Matthew and Luke speak of it (see [Introduction to the Gospels](#) about the source Q), whereas Mark does not.

[776] The parable speaks of a rich man going off to another country, perhaps on a business trip. He chooses three of his servants and gives them **five, two and one talent** (one talent was equivalent to 10,000 denarii and one denarius is a day's wage for a worker) respectively expecting them to trade with the money and earn some more by the time he returns. The first one who was given five talents goes off immediately and trades harshly to double his money, as does the second. Both of whom prove successful and do well.

[777] The rich man returns after a long time and calls his servants into account. He praises the two servants who doubled their money and gives them more to trade with afterwards, since they proved themselves well with little money and thus will be given more.

[778] The narrative moves on to the third servant, who approaches the owner and returns his safely guarded money to him. He admits that the owner was a **hard man**, and that he reaps what he does not sow and gathers what he does not scatter, i.e. he is an unjust man who profits illegally, and as such he is to be feared. The servant, in fear of failure does not even try to make a profit, but simply protects the money and returns it to his owner. Enraged, the owner admits that he profits illegally and that if the servant really knew him to be a hard man, he would have at least given the money to the bank to gain interest (at this point, the readers of the gospel know that they are hearing about a Gentile, since he speaks of interest). The owner takes the money from the useless servant and gives it to the one who had ten talents.

[779] The moral and lesson of the parable is about God and His servants; the meaning here may be that when it comes to entering the Kingdom of God, one should be willing to take risks and try one's hardest to gain in this world for the next. In accordance with this interpretation, the first two servants are commended and should be imitated; since they immediately and without delay worked hard to gain in this world for their lord. In turn, they are called back by their lord who will settle their accounts, much like how God will call back His people to judge them based on their deeds. When called back, they do well since they achieved much; yet when it comes to the third servant, he proved to be lazy and did no work, but rather held the money and returned it without any further gain. This servant has been proven to be useless and rightfully does not deserve to enter the kingdom of God. To such people, whatever good deeds they have, will be given over to those who strived hard in this life and thus they will be left with nothing and cast into hell.

Some may object that the owner in the above account is immoral, for he reaps what he does not sow etc. How could such a one be likened to God? The lesson is for the servants, that whatever they think about their owner/God is irrelevant; they are to work for Him. There may be instances in their lives where they think that they are being wronged, or that their lives are unfair in comparison to others and this may in turn form into a complaint against God. Yet, the servants (mankind) should show patience and contentment; they should cast out such thoughts and concentrate on what God has given them: life. They should use this gift in attaining nearness to Him and do whatever they can to gain His favour, like the first servant who produced so much money for his owner.

[780] The final judgement is now reported by Matthew, which is a continuation of the second coming of Jesus. I explain under [John 5:23](#), the role of judgement (judging people) being given to Jesus, which seemed to have been borrowed from certain Jewish groups who held the belief that the future Messiah would come to judge the world, see under [Mark 1:1](#) for a fuller explanation of the concept of the Messiah in the first century. However, since Jesus never judged anyone in his earthly life, the early Church thought therefore of placing this role of judge in Jesus' second coming.

The above account begins with such a notion, that in his second coming, Jesus will sit on the **throne of glory**, i.e. the throne of God. All the nations of the world will be gathered to him, like the gathering of the day of Judgement, where Jesus will then separate out the sinners from the righteous, i.e. Jesus will play the role of Judge, as if on the day of Judgement. However, this is the role of the Ultimate Judge, God Himself and not Jesus, as is explicitly mentioned by Jesus in John 12:48. Thus the above tradition of Jesus himself being a judge is to be taken with a pinch of salt. In fact, it seems to have been the creation of the early Church.

Elsewhere Jesus speaks of the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28), yet no Christian has ever placed the twelve disciples (including Judas it seems) in a Divine judging role. Finally, in Mark 10:27; Jesus speaks of the judgement of God in the hereafter, not his own judgement.

The separation of the good and the bad, on the right and the left hand is echoed in the Holy Quran:

“Those on the right hand, how lucky are those on the right hand! And those on the left hand, how unlucky are those on the left hand!” (56:9-10)

In the statement of Jesus above, the righteous are represented as **sheep** while the unrighteous as **goats**; this of course linking to Jesus being the Shepherd of the sheep.

[781] As mentioned above, the idea that Jesus would judge on the Day of Judgement is likely to have been introduced by the early Church to fulfil some of the roles of the Messiah which certain groups of Jews believed. The King in the above verse is Jesus, since he speaks to those on his right hand and refers to them as **blessed of my Father**. However, the role which is assigned to Jesus afterwards in the remaining verses is clearly inaccurate and is in place of God Himself, who seems to have been placed in the background, and in fact is not mentioned at all in the judgement, which is clearly not the case.

[782] The reason for the righteous being blessed is given; all the actions are mentioned in the past tense, thus allowing the readers to reflect and see their own actions in the past. The verses speak of God being **hungry, thirsty, lonely, naked, sick** and in **prison** and the righteous took care of Him. Obviously, after He says so, the righteous ask how this is possible for the All-Powerful God. The answer is that whenever they took care of one of the servants of God, it was as if they had taken care of God Himself.

A similar account is better explained in the hadith sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him):

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O my Lord; how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord would again say:) O son of

Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Such and such of servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me. (Sahih Muslim, Book 32, Number 6232, made available by www.sunnah.com).

It should also be noted that the above speak of *actions* of the righteous, that is *deeds* as against pure *faith* which was what was emphasised by Paul and his Churches over actions and deeds. The righteous and heaven bound people are those who perform such actions to humanity which please God. Thus it comes as no surprise that the above account is only recorded in Matthew's Gospel (being a Petrine type Christian, see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book) and not recorded by the other gospel authors who were Paulines.

[783] A point worth making here is the fact that according to the Bible and many Christians, hell is considered to be an **eternal** abode, and everlasting punishment from God, just like Heaven will be an eternal and everlasting reward. To many non-Christians, this seems to be unjust and does not fit the characteristics of a loving God so often spoken of by Christian preachers. Many people live their lives not hearing of Jesus, or perhaps living lives where they are indoctrinated in such views which heavily contrast with that of Christianity and for such reasons they do not believe in the divinity of Jesus nor in his atonement; yet, these people are often still incredibly charitable and good natured, possessing excellent moral conduct and character. But, according to most Christians, these people will be damned to hell for all eternity. Could a Loving God really be so cruel?

Such a view is not shared by Islam, where hell is considered to be a place of reformation for the disobedient and once reformed, they are admitted into God's mercy. The Holy Quran states that:

"Then as for him whose scales are heavy, he will have a pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, his mother will be Hell." (101:7-10).

Explaining this verse, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Caliph of the Promised Messiah explains:

"The Arabic word ام (Um), primarily meaning 'mother' has a variety of secondary significations such as source, origin, support, an abode, etc (Lane & Aqrab). The verse signifies that the connection of the sinful people with Hell will be life that of a baby with its mother. Just as the embryo goes through various stages of development in the womb till it is born as a full-fledged human being, so will the guilty people pass through different states of spiritual torture, till their souls are completely cleansed of the taint of sin and they will thus receive a new birth. Thus the punishments of Hell are intended to make the wicked repent of their sins and so reform themselves. According to the Islamic concept of Hell, it is penitentiary." (*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 5, p.2875)

Allah is also described as رحيم (Raheem), the All-Merciful God. An All-Merciful God would not eternally punish His creation; likewise Allah is also described as الودود (Al Wadood), the Loving, which again does not fit a God punishing His loved ones for eternity.

[784] For a detailed commentary on Jesus' predicting his death see under Mark 8:31. In short, these are likely to be the words of the author and not of Jesus.

[785] Important Words

See note in Mark 1:1 for the translation of εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion/gospel*). The WEB translates the word as *Good News* which is correct, however I have opted for the above, see notes on next verse for a fuller explanation.

[786] Matthew's account of the Woman with the Ointment is a direct copy of [Mark 14:3-9](#), see notes under Mark for further details.

[787] Like the previous chapter, our author Matthew copied from the Gospel of Mark, this time [14:10-11](#). The only addition he made was that he added that the purpose of the betrayal was for monetary means, which is highly unlikely if Judas was part of or formally part of the Zealot group. See notes under Mark for more details.

[788] The copying of the Gospel of Mark continues; this time from [Mark 14:12-17](#), see notes under Mark for details. Matthew, makes a few subtle changes though, unlike Mark, no mention is made of the number of disciples sent on the errand, nor the large room prepared, but most importantly, Matthew omits the reference of the sacrifice in Mark 14:12. Perhaps this is because he was targeting a Jewish audience and therefore didn't require explaining the Passover rules and sacrifices.

[789] **Important Words**

ἐγὼ εἰμι (*ego aimee*) – Literally / *am*. But in the context, it is better to translate it as above. See John 8:58 : “Before Abraham Was, I Am” for details of the phrase.

[790] **Important Words**

Ibid

[791] Matthew's setting and account is identical to [Mark 14:18-21](#), see notes under that chapter for a detailed discussion. Matthew, does add the last verse though, where Judas also asks (rather strangely) Jesus whether it is him; perhaps he, too, wished to join in along with the other disciples. Jesus' reply is ambiguous, and seems to simply affirm Judas' denial, but if Jesus was confirming that Judas was to betray him, it's very odd that the other disciples would just sit there and do nothing about it. The image painted by both Mark and Matthew is very strange. If Jesus did find out that Judas wished to betray him, it is likely that he confronted Judas privately, but was unable to convince him to change his plans (see [John 13:30](#) below). After failing to convince him, Judas may have left to fetch the officers to arrest Jesus. Jesus probably then spoke the above informing his disciples that he is about to be betrayed and in turn condemns the betrayer.

[792] **Textual Variant**

The above is the original wording. However, late manuscripts such as Codex Bezae and Alexandrinus along with the Received Text read: 'blood of the *new* covenant', whilst earlier manuscripts: Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, p³⁷ and p⁴⁵ read as above. Scholars have argued that later Christian scribes were influenced by Luke 22:20, which contains the word *new* before *covenant*, and the scribes wanted to harmonise both Matthew and Luke. (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.171).

[793] Matthew's account is exactly the same as [Mark 14:22-25](#), see notes under Mark for details. Matthew adds the last few words in verse 28 where the concept of atonement is further made clearer. As argued above under Mark, these cannot be the words of Jesus and must be the words of the authors of the gospels themselves or at least their sources.

[794] Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi writes:

“This verse clearly shows that Jesus, after he had come out of the sepulchre, went to Galilee and not to heaven. His words ‘After I am risen’ do not mean coming to life after being dead; rather, Jesus used these words in anticipation of what the people were going to say in the future, because as it turned out, they thought he had died on the cross. And indeed, if a man is put on the cross, with nails driven into his hands and feet, and he faints away for all his suffering, looking more dead than

alive; if such a man is saved from his ordeal and recovers his senses, it would hardly be an exaggeration on his part to say that he had come to life again (*Jesus in India*, 2016, p.21).

[795] Matthew's version is the same as Mark 14:26-31, with two small modifications; the first is the addition of verse 32 and the second is that in Mark the prediction about Peter's denial will happen before the cock crows *twice*, whilst in Matthew it is before the cock crows just once. Which is correct? Even though the difference is very small, it is still a difference in the prophecy of Jesus, which is impossible to reconcile.

[796] The account of Matthew is almost identical to that of Mark 14:32-42, with the addition of verse 42, where Matthew writes the second prayer of Jesus which Mark omits.

[797] Up to this point, the text of Matthew is very similar to Mark 14:43-52, with the exception of Jesus asking Judas about his intentions in verse 50. The anonymous disciple draws his sword and fights Jesus' attackers just like in Mark, but here in Matthew Jesus rebukes him and orders him to sheathe his sword. The reason given is that those who **live by the sword die by it**.

However, this saying of Jesus is problematic, since it contradicts his own command earlier; that the disciples are to purchase swords (Luke 22:35-38). If the statement of Jesus that those who live by the sword die by it, why did Jesus order the buying of swords earlier and why was Peter carrying a sword? Surely Jesus would have known and ordered Peter to discard it. Furthermore, Jesus does not order Peter to discard his sword, but rather sheathe it, which again only illustrates that he did not wish Peter to fight in that instance, but gave him permission to carry one.

Numerous interpretations have been presented to explain away these inconsistencies; some Christians have argued that it was customary to carry swords in first century Judea, and that these were in fact large knives to cut meat or were used as protection from wild animals etc. This isn't true, it was *not* customary to carry swords, as it would have resulted in harsh punishments from the Romans, but even if it was customary, the carrying of them was still *against* Jesus' principles and the saying above.

As regards the argument that the disciples were carrying large knives and not swords as weapons may be partially correct, since the Greek noun used for sword above is *μαχαίρα* (*maxaira*) meaning: *originally a large knife for killing and cutting up; in the NT; literally, as a curved weapon for close combat (small sword); dagger* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). However, to argue that this blade was used for butchery only is inaccurate as explained by the definition above. Furthermore, Jesus states elsewhere in the gospels that he did not come to bring peace but the sword (*maxaira*); this would not mean that he came to bring large butcher's knives (Matthew 10:34). Likewise, the Gentiles will come and cut the Jews with the *maxaira* (Luke 21:24); again sword not butcher's knife. The Jewish soldiers mentioned above who came to arrest Jesus were carrying clubs and *maxaira*. In fact, practically all references to *maxaira* in the gospels are referring to swords as weapons.

As regards the argument that they were carrying the swords to protect themselves against wild animals, this again is far-fetched, as it is highly unlikely that Jerusalem was overrun by wild animals, which required people to carry swords for protection. For more details, see under Luke 22:38 for the possible reasons of why Jesus' disciples were carrying swords.

[798] A Roman Legion at that time consisted of roughly 5,000 soldiers, so Jesus is stating that if he chose to do so, he would be able to pray to God who would send down to him 70,000 angels. But in turn he seems to accept his fate and go along with it, since this is in accordance with the scriptures. But as already explained under Mark 14:49, no such scripture foretells the suffering and dying of the Messiah, thus the above words are of the author and not of Jesus.

[799] Interestingly, Matthew omits the account of the young man fleeing naked mentioned by Mark. Matthew probably felt it unimportant and perhaps embarrassing to record it in his gospel.

[800] Thus far the text of Matthew is almost identical to that of Mark, check the notes under [Mark 14:53-72](#) for details. With regard to the accusation about the destruction of the Temple, Matthew omits the reference to the destruction of the Temple made by *humans* and the rebuilding of it without *humans*. This may be due to the Jewishness of Matthew; who likely had a stronger link with the Temple than Mark, and wished not to write that it was built with human hands.

[801] After getting no reply from Jesus, Caiaphas resorts to the *oath of testimony*. According to the Mishnah, if anyone were to say to another, “I impose an oath on you, by the name of the Almighty, these are liable to answer’ (Shabuot 4:13). Such an oath is not in Mark, which isn’t surprising since the oath is a Jewish custom which Mark himself may have been unaware of or at least his audience would have; therefore, it would have been pointless for him to retain it in his gospel. After being challenged by Caiaphas, Jesus, being a good Jew broke his silence and answered him above.

For a detailed discussion of the phrase **son of God**, see notes under [Mark 3:11](#).

[802] Matthew adds a further reason as to why the officers and the slave-girl thought that Peter was a follower of Jesus, for he too was a Galilean, and they knew this from his accent.

[803] In Mark, the cock crows *twice* before Peter realises that he has denied Jesus three times; however, in the above Matthean account, the **cock crows** just once. This actually goes in line with Jesus’ supposed prediction of Peter’s denial (see [Mark 14:26-31](#)/[Matt 26-30-35](#)), where according to Mark Jesus speaks of the cock crowing *twice* and Matthew has it crow just the *once*. The discrepancy is small and almost negligible, but again it points to the authors having different traditions when recording their gospels.

[804] Matthew, continues his use of the Gospel of Mark, this time from [Mark 15:1](#).

[805] After the chief priests take Jesus to Pilate, Matthew records that Judas sees what he has done and repents. As mentioned in 26:14-16, Matthew is the only gospel which accuses Judas of betraying Jesus for *greed*, asking the priests what they will give him if he delivers Jesus to them. In the above, he repents and goes back to the priests to return the money.

[806] He complains to the priests, confessing his guilt and perhaps may have tried (in vain) to convince them that Jesus wasn’t deserving of death. It is likely that Judas’ intention was solely to expose Jesus as a fake Messiah; he would not have had the intention of having him put to death, since he himself would have seen that Jesus had committed no crime worthy of death. The fact that he travelled with Jesus and accompanied him may have also established some kind of bond between the two, however weak.

Traditional Christian interpretations vary slightly on the intention and whether Judas’ repentance was genuine and accepted. The early Christian scholar and theologian Origen (third century) argued that Judas’ repentance was genuine and possibly accepted by God, whilst later Church fathers belittled it and argued that it was not successful and that Judas was bound for eternal punishment in hell.

[807] Judas then tosses the **silver pieces** he received from the chief priests into the **Temple** and goes off and **hangs** himself. A similar event occurred in the time of David when

Ahithophel betrayed the new King David, and he, too, went and hanged himself (2 Sam 17:23). For Matthew, that is the end of the story of Judas and nothing more is spoken of him. This seems to be the final sin committed by Judas, since suicide has in the majority of cases been seen as a sin, going against one of the Ten Commandments: 'You shall not kill' (Exodus 20:13).

The statement that Judas killed himself by **hanging** himself creates problems with the account recorded by Luke in Acts 1:18, where Luke (the author of Acts) has Peter declare that Judas *and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out*. Peter seems to be unaware that Judas hanged himself and that he intended to kill himself, and seems to indicate that Judas was possibly visited by Divine punishment, since he falls forward and likely fell on a stone which lacerated his belly causing his insides to gush out. Finally, we have a third account of Judas' death, this time by an early Christian leader, Papias (second century) has Judas live on but in a miserable state of life, and that his body became swollen (perhaps through illness or overeating) so that he could not pass through a road where a chariot would pass through. In the end he met his demise by being crushed by a chariot where his bowels gushed out (Papias Fragment 3, 1742–1744).

To reconcile these discrepancies, particularly Matthew's version and the one in Acts, most Christians have argued for *both* accounts, merging them; in that Judas hanged himself and after some time his body bloated up and the rope or branch of the tree snapped causing the body to fall *headlong* and when striking the ground, his stomach burst. But, there are a few problems with this story: Firstly, yes it has happened in the past when people have tried to hang themselves the rope does snap. Question, how do they fall? Do they fall *headlong*? I.e. on their heads? No. Second problem is that Luke (the author of Acts) records that Judas himself bought the potter's field with the money (1:18); whilst in the above the chief priests do, showing further that Luke was completely unaware of the alternative Matthean tradition. Furthermore, the incredible nature of a body hanging, bloating or swelling and then falling is so rare that Luke surely would have made certain that his readers were told of this fascinating event, yet he completely omits it.

It is more likely that Matthew had access to, or heard of a tradition where the priests bought the field with the money and Judas hanged himself. Luke on the other hand had access to another tradition where Judas himself bought the field and then fell on the ground and his stomach burst.

[808] The Jewish priests are now left with the money, but they are uncertain what to do with it, since all of a sudden according to them, the money is *blood money*, which is often money given to the family of murder victims. Thus Jesus is the victim of a murder and the money is for him, making the chief priests themselves murderers. This can't be the case, so it is likely that these are the words of the author himself who wished to portray the hypocrisy of the chief priests to the extreme; that they themselves are now admitting that they are murderers. Furthermore the priests now all of a sudden have fear of God and wish not to break any of His commandments by permitting blood money to be given to the Temple treasury, thus showing further hypocrisy, in following the minor commandments but committing the major sins such as murder. In essence they are 'straining out a mosquito and gulping down a camel' (Matthew 23:24).

It is also uncertain which exact law the acceptance of blood money breaks; perhaps the author has Deut 23:18 in mind where the wages of prostitutes and of a dog are not permitted.

[809] As already pointed out above, the naming of the field, or how it got its name is uncertain, since Luke in his account in Acts describes how Judas falls and his stomach bursts open and for that reason it is called the Field of Blood, which is completely different from the version or reason in Matthew above. If an attempt is made to find the historical reason, then the account in Acts would be more accurate, since the chief priests would never refer to the money as blood money, making themselves murderers as Matthew points out.

[810] The initial difficulty with the above text is that the quotation *is not* from the Book of Jeremiah but from the Book of Zechariah: "Then the LORD said to me, "Cast it into the

treasury" -- the lordly price at which I was paid off by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and cast them into the treasury in the house of the LORD" (11:13).

As can be seen from the original quotation, major modifications have been made to the text by Matthew in order to make the event match the prophecy. The quotation is also difficult to interpret, but refers to the sale of God by the Israelites, which is what Matthew is referring to above; the sale of Jesus for a mere thirty pieces of silver. But as mentioned above, it is unlikely that the chief priests referred to the money as blood money, making themselves murderers; putting doubt on the entire Matthean account, including the above so-called fulfilled prophecy.

[811] Matthew, follows the lead of Mark, this time Chapter 15:1-5, and has Jesus suddenly appear in-front of Pilate with the latter asking him whether he is the **King of the Jews** or not. Pilate seems to be aware of the charge and questions Jesus as to whether he claims to be the Messiah of Israel. The answer of Jesus: **So you say**, is ambiguous and is neither a denial nor an acceptance. Some interpreters have stated that Jesus does so intentionally, since he did claim to be the Messiah and King of Israel, but not in the form or way Pilate understood it. However, it is likely to be an affirmation, since Jesus says the same in Matthew 26: 25 and 64, implying an affirmation.

[812] Like Mark, Matthew also continues from The Trial before Pilate, recorded in Mark 15:4-14. Matthew's source is Mark's Gospel, and as such much of his text is almost identical to that of Mark's with a few additions which will be addressed below. For details about this passage, see notes in the Gospel of Mark.

[813] Textual Variant

The above reading is different from the WEB, RSV and the majority of Greek manuscripts which omit the name of Jesus before Barabbas as opposed to a few Old Syriac Gospels which read as above. This was also known to the Church Father Origen who writes that he, too, found a number of copies with the name *Jesus Barabbas* and thought the omission was correct. There is debate amongst scholars as to which is the correct reading, since the majority of manuscripts omit the change, leaving only a handful with the name. Yet, it would make absolutely no sense for a Christian scribe to append the name Jesus to the murderer Barabbas, thus making the inclusion of the name more likely to be the original. This is also the conclusion of the majority of Textual Critics (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, 2005).

[814] As already mentioned above in the Textual Variant, Matthew records the name of the prisoner to be **Jesus Barabbas**. Since the whole event is unlikely to have happened, it is uncertain why Matthew appends the name to Barabbas; perhaps to expand on the contrast of the two prisoners even further (see under Mark 15:7).

[815] Matthew makes an interesting addition to the text of Mark: during the actual trial, Pilate's **wife** interrupts by sending him a message about a **dream** she had regarding Jesus. This may have been one of the reasons why Pilate was trying to have Jesus released; his wife was concerned and had a dream about Jesus. It may have been one which proved his innocence and prophetic status. In the apocryphal book, Acts of Pilate, it is recorded: "And as Jesus was going in by the ensigns, who carried the standards, the tops of them bowed down, and worshipped Jesus" (Chapter 1:20). It is possible that Pilate's wife may have seen this as a dream which was later interpreted as an actual event.

The reader should not underestimate the dream of the wife, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) writes extensively about this sign:

"...When Pilate presided at his court, his wife sent word to him saying, Have nothing to do with that just man (don't seek to have him killed) for I have suffered many things in a dream because of him. So, this angel, whom the wife of Pilate saw in her dream, would have us and all fair-minded people believe, that God had never intended for Jesus to die on the cross. Ever since creation, it has never happened that God should reveal to a person in a dream that a particular thing would happen in a certain way, and still that thing should fail to happen. For example, Matthew says that an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream and said: 'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.'

(Matthew 2:13) Can anyone imagine that Jesus could have been killed in Egypt? The dream of Pilate's wife was similarly a part of divine design, which could never fail in its objective. Just as the possibility of Jesus being put to death during the journey to Egypt was against the specific promise of God, so here too it is unthinkable that the angel of God should appear to Pilate's wife and point out to her that if Jesus died on the cross it would spell disaster for her, and yet the angel's appearance should go in vain, and Jesus should be allowed to suffer death on the cross. Is there any example of this in the world? None. The pure conscience of all good men, when informed of the dream of Pilate's wife, will no doubt testify that for a fact it was the purpose of the dream to lay the foundation for Jesus' rescue. (*Jesus in India*, 2016, p.26)

[816] The rest of the story is the same as Mark's.

[817] Textual Variant

The above is the original reading according to the earliest manuscripts; Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae. While the Codex Sinaiticus and others read: *I am innocent of this righteous man's blood*. This reading is most likely a scribal interpolation adapted from Pilate's wife's comment about Jesus being a just man in 27:19 above. (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.174)

Commentary

After realising that he would not be able to change the minds of the Jewish crowds, Pilate brings some **water** and **washes his hands** in front of them as a sign of his innocence. The practice of washing one's hands is actually not a Gentile practice, but a Jewish one. It seems to stem from Deut 21:1-9, where if a slain man is found with no one around him and the elders do not know who murdered him, they are to sacrifice a cow and wash their hands over the cow declaring that they did not shed this man's blood. It is therefore probably unlikely that Pilate, a Gentile would have followed and performed a Jewish custom, and as such the above is most likely to be the invention of Matthew rather than historical.

[818] If we are to assume that Pilate's hand-washing is the invention of Matthew, then the cry of Jews is equally the invention of Matthew. Matthew of course is not condemning *all* the Jews and their children for countless generations, for he, too, is a Jew and likewise belonged to a Jewish Christian Church. He in fact is condemning the people in the crowd, led by the Jewish priests. The blame for Jesus' death is placed on them and Matthew has them curse themselves in effect.

[819] The reason for Jesus being **flogged** seems to differ in the gospel accounts: both Mark and Matthew speak of the flogging as an official part of the crucifixion, whereas Luke omits any reference to any flogging, but speaks of Jesus being disciplined (23: 22); whilst in John it seems that the flogging was part of the benevolent plan of Pilate to have Jesus released (John 19:1-6). His aim seems to have been to have Jesus flogged and returned to the Jews bloody and battered to convince them that he is harmless and too helpless to be a threat.

[820]

Matthew's account seems to be almost identical to that of Mark 15:15-20. After Jesus is condemned, he is then flogged and mocked by the soldiers. After the flogging, the soldiers continue to mock Jesus and dress him up with purple garments, most likely the ones he was wearing after Herod had him dressed up (Luke 23:11). They continue doing so until it is time to have him taken out to the cross. This seems to have been the standard practice of the Romans in treating condemned criminals.

[821] Matthew continues his copying of Mark's Gospel, this time Mark 15:21-27. Whilst they were taking Jesus out to Golgotha, where he was to be crucified, the soldiers seem to randomly choose a passer-by and force him to help Jesus in carrying the cross, as he was too weak from his ordeal beginning with the Jewish crowds and his flogging by the

Roman soldiers. Some scholars have even suggested that Jesus refused to carry the cross in protest against the injustice of his condemnation.

[822] It is debated amongst scholars as to who exactly was giving the wine and for what purpose the wine was being given to Jesus. As regards who, some scholars believe that the Roman soldiers offered him wine as a form of torture, particular by adding a lot of myrrh (Mark) or gall in Matthew so as to make it bitter and undrinkable. Others argue that it was a continuation of their mockery, as if offering wine to a King.

Many other scholars have come to the conclusion that it was in fact Jewish women who tried to give it to him. Indeed it was a Jewish custom to do so; in the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs, it is commanded that the Jews “Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more (31:6-7). In the Talmud it is recorded that noble women in Jerusalem used to donate and bring wine for the victims of punishments (m. Sanh. 6:1). Thus it is likely that wine mixed with myrrh was brought by some women to give to Jesus in order to dull the pain, or more likely as will be explained under [John 19:30](#), the wine was probably a sedative brought by some of the female followers of Jesus (Mark 15:41).

Jesus however, refused to take the drink, most likely knowing the custom that it was to dull the pain of the victim by dulling their senses, but he would have wanted to stay in the right state of mind, praying to God in the hope and expectation that He would save him from the accursed death.

[823] These two may have been robbers, bandits, rebels etc. or possibly Zealots.

[824] The text of Matthew is almost identical to that of [Mark 15:29-32](#). See notes under Mark for details. Also for a detailed discussion of the phrase **son of God**, see notes under [Mark 3:11](#).

[825] The two thieves or rebels who were crucified along with Jesus joined in their taunts. It may be worth noting that the verb is in the imperfect tense, implying that they were taunting him and kept on taunting him.

[826] See notes under [Mark 15:33](#) for a detailed discussion of this verse.

[827] See notes under [Mark 15:34](#) for a detailed discussion of this verse.

[828] It is uncertain who exactly Matthew is referring to when stating that those standing by heard it and said that he was **calling Elijah**. It wouldn't have been the Roman soldiers since they were Gentiles and wouldn't have a clue who Elijah was. It may well have been some of the chief priests, who decided to stick around and when hearing Jesus cry, unable to exactly make out what he was saying, thought and uttered rather mockingly that he was calling out to the miracle-working Prophet Elijah to come from heaven and save him.

[829] Textual Variant

A number of early manuscripts add to the end of this verse: *Another took his spear and pierced his side, and out came water and blood*, manuscripts such as Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus have this extra sentence. The general consensus among scholars about the inclusion is that it was interpolated from John 19:34. However, some scholars are not so sure and question whether it might in fact have been an original of Matthew. They cite a number of reasons such as: 1) The manuscripts evidence for the longer verse is much

stronger than the shorter verse. 2) If it was taken from John's gospel, why wasn't it taken verbatim, in that the wording is slightly different to John's Gospel. 3) The reason Christian scribes would want to delete it would have been due to the fact that it contradicts the Gospel of John, since in John's Gospel the spearing happens *after* Jesus' supposed death, while here in Matthew it occurs *before*. Christian scribes would want to remove it to create harmony amongst the gospels, not contradictions. (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.176).

I myself am uncertain and will leave it to the reader to decide whether it was original or not.

Commentary

Matthew differs from Mark in the above; in Mark the man who wishes to prolong Jesus' life to see if Elijah would come, he is the one making the statement to see if Elijah would come. However, in Matthew the chief priests standing by continue to mock Jesus and it is they who say the words rather than the man giving the drink. It is impossible to know which of the versions is historically correct.

[830] After receiving the drink, Jesus cries out and breathes his last. It may be worth noting that the last thing that occurs when Jesus supposedly breathes his last is the drinking of the wine. What was in this drink? The historical Jesus was a healer, and it is likely that the followers of Jesus were also familiar with medicines. Thus their plan begins to materialise; the only way to save Jesus from dying on the cross was to place him into a deep swoon, and thus *look* dead. With prayers and God's help, the Romans would thus think Jesus to be dead and readily hand him over to his disciples and family, at which point they would immediately tend to his wounds and revive him. The first part of the plan seems to work, Jesus takes the drink and falls unconscious. The eyewitness who saw Jesus **breathe his last** saw him fall unconscious and mistook him for dead.

[831] Matthew adds the fact that an earthquake also occurred when Jesus 'dies', and it is likely that this is what caused the Temple curtain to tear.

[832] After the earthquake and splitting of the Temple curtain, Matthew records that many of the **tombs** were opened (possibly by the earthquake) and many saints were brought back to life. They then wander into the city and appear to many. However, this can't have happened, since it's not documented by any other writer of the time besides Matthew. Mark, Luke and John all omit such a fantastic miracle, along with writers such as Philo, Josephus and a number of Greek writers who would surely have recorded such a public miracle. Another difficulty arises as to the purpose and reception of such a miracle; surely the entire city would have been in turmoil, with people asking the dead saints what they had been doing, and where were they? Did they see God? Some of the followers of Jesus would have perhaps asked them about Jesus as well! There are simply too many questions regarding this event to take it literally.

It may have been a vision of one of the disciples, which was recorded, but Matthew not knowing its context interpreted it literally and thought it as a real life occurrence. J.D Shams comments on the above account, indicating that it would most likely have been a dream:

"It is most interesting that in an Arabic book *Ta'tir-ul-Anam* (page 289), on the interpretation of dreams and written over 600 years ago by a leading authority on the subject, Shaikh Abdul-Ghani Nablusi, we read; 'If anyone sees in a dream that the dead have come out of their graves and have made for their homes, the interpretation of this is that a great man who is in prison would be released from the prison and would be rescued.'" (*Where did Jesus die?* 2004, p.5)

Yet this seriously dents the confidence readers may have of Matthew's intelligence, since such a spectacle would have still been on people's minds some forty years later when Matthew was compiling his gospel. Anyone could have asked an elder if such a miracle did in fact occur.

The other possibility is that Matthew was modelling the event on Ezekiel 37:12-13: “Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people.” Yet at the same time, it is still difficult to see how and why Matthew would have used such a text to create such a fantastic miracle. It may be that Matthew was expecting the end of times to be approaching and the raising of the dead saints was one of its signs.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) wrote about the above verse:

“There is not the slightest doubt that the story mentioned in the Gospel that after the resurrection of Jesus the saints came out of the graves and appeared alive to many, is not based on any historical fact; for, had it been so, the Judgment Day would have taken place in this very world, and what had been kept secret as a test of faith and sincerity would have been made manifest to all. Faith would not have been faith, and, in the sight of every believer and denier, the nature of the next world would have become an evident and open fact, like the existence of the moon, the sun, and the alternation of day and night. In that case, faith would have no value, nor would it merit any reward. If the people and past prophets of Israel whose number is millions, had really been brought to life at the time of the crucifixion and had in fact come back to the city alive, and if this miracle, that hundred of thousands of saints and prophets were all brought to life at the same time, were really shown to prove the truth and divinity of Jesus, the Jews would have had an excellent opportunity to inquire of their prophets, saints, and other ancestors, whether Jesus who claimed to be God was indeed God, or was he a liar!

One can easily imagine that they could not have missed this welcome opportunity. They must have inquired about Jesus, for the Jews were very keen to compare notes with the dead if they could be restored to life. When, therefore, hundreds of thousands of the dead were restored to life, and flocked to the city in their thousands, how could the Jews have let go such an opportunity? They must have inquired, not from one or two, but from thousands; and when the dead entered their respective houses there must have been great commotion all over the place, for many hundreds of thousands of them had been brought back to life. In every house there must have been great excitement, and everybody must have been questioning the dead as to whether the man Jesus, who called himself the Messiah, was really God. But because the Jews, after the testimony of the dead, did not believe in Jesus, as we would expect them to do, nor did their hearts soften, rather if anything, they became confirmed in their hard-heartedness, it appears more than probable that the dead did not speak a single favourable word for him. They must have pronounced straightaway that this man was making a false claim to Godhood, and was lying against God. That was why the Jews did not desist from mischief in spite of the fact that hundreds of thousands of prophets and apostles had been restored to life. Having ‘killed’ Jesus, they attempted to kill all others.

How can one believe that hundreds of thousands of saints who, right from the time of Adam up to the time of John the Baptist, had been resting in their graves in the holy land, should all be brought back to life; that they should all flock to the city to preach, and everyone of them should stand up and testify before thousands of people that Jesus, the Messiah, was really the Son of God—no, God Himself; that he alone should be worshipped; that the people should renounce their former beliefs, otherwise, they would go to hell, which these saints had witnessed for themselves! Yet, notwithstanding such excellent evidence and such eyewitness accounts which proceeded from the mouths of hundreds of thousands of dead saints, the Jews should not desist from their denial! I personally am not prepared to believe this. Therefore, if hundreds of thousands of saints, prophets and apostles, etc., who were dead, had really come to life and had visited the city to give evidence, they must undoubtedly have given unfavourable evidence; they could never have borne witness to the divinity of Jesus. Perhaps this is the reason why the Jews became more firmly entrenched in their disbelief after listening to the evidence of the dead. Jesus wanted them to believe in his divinity, but they, because of this evidence, denied that he was even a prophet. In short, such beliefs have a highly deleterious and unhealthy effect...” (*Jesus in India*, 2016. p.46-48)

[833] Besides what has already been mentioned above, the text of Matthew is almost identical to that of Mark.

[834] Matthew continues copying from the Gospel of Mark, he mentions three women from among the followers of Jesus who stood by at a distance, although there may have been more. Even though he copies from Mark, he speaks of **Mary Magdalene** and **Mary the mother of James and Joses**, but replaces *Salome* in Mark with the **mother of James and John Zebedee**.

[835] The text of Matthew is virtually identical to that of Mark's along with his context and setting, except that he does not record Pilate confirming Jesus' death with the centurion mentioned in Mark 15:44. For a discussion on the remaining verses, see under Mark.

[836] After Jesus is set in the tomb in the previous chapter, Matthew moves on to the next day and turns his attention to the **chief priests** who seem a little unsettled and seem unsure whether the execution was successful. It is important to note that the tomb in which Jesus was placed was undisturbed for the entire night, thus allowing Joseph and Nicodemus many hours to tend to his wounds and nurse him back to health.

[837] **Important Words**

κύριος (*kurios*) – noun, dative plural, masculine of κύριος (*kurios*). See under Luke 1:43 for the meaning of the word. The WEB and RSV prefer to translate this as *Sir*.

[838] They gather to Pilate and ask him to place a guard at the tomb, since they supposedly heard Jesus prophesy that he would resurrect after three days. They fear that the disciples will come and **steal** the body and then proclaim that he resurrected and that the people will believe this, even though the day before at the trial the same people were all shouting to have Jesus condemned (27:25).

It is safe to assume that the priests may well have gone to Pilate and asked for a guard, but not for the reason as explained above; to state that the Jews wished to put a guard at the tomb in order to prevent the disciples from stealing Jesus' body and then proclaim that he was resurrected is absurd. The claim would very easily be rebutted by simply asking the disciples to show him. Furthermore what would the disciples do with a dead body? It is unlikely that they would have paraded him/it around Jerusalem.

The reason why the Jews wished to place a guard at the tomb was for the simple reason that they were uncertain whether Jesus had died or not. He was not on the cross long enough for him to die; even Pilate doubted it as mentioned in Mark 15:44. They wanted to make sure he was dead, and by placing a guard at the tomb this would ensure just that, and if he was not, it would ensure that he could not escape with the aid of his disciples.

[839] **Important Words**

ἔχετε (*ekhetē*) – Verb, present active indicative, 2nd person plural of ἔχω (*ekhow*) meaning: *to have; hold; keep* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Although the verb is in the indicative, it should however be understood as an imperative (a command); only then does the verse make sense. Otherwise the WEB's translation *You have a guard; Go, make it as secure as you can*, makes little sense since the guard is a group of *Roman soldiers* which the Jews did not have. Furthermore, later in Matthew 28: 11-15, it is obvious that the guard are Roman soldiers, not Jewish. Thus in the verse, Pilate is fulfilling the request of the Jews and giving them some soldiers to guard the tomb.

[840] After the chief priests visit Pilate in the previous chapter, Matthew then returns to the account of Jesus. He is using Mark as his source, but makes a number of changes, mainly due to the presence of the guard at the tomb. Verse 1 is similar to Mark 16:1, see notes under the verse for a fuller explanation of *why* the women came to the tomb. Matthew omits the reason Mark states, which was to anoint Jesus. It is likely that being Jewish, Matthew knew full well that they would not have come to anoint Jesus after two

days and thus simply has them come to see the tomb. As explained above, the women most likely came to see Jesus, for they knew that he had survived and wanted to see how his recovery was going.

[841] No mention of any earthquake is made in the text of Mark, or Luke or John for that matter. Thus it is likely that the earthquake was the invention of Matthew; this, in addition to the angel descending from heaven, which was likely added to show that even though both the Jews and the Romans (the guard) teamed up to ensure that Jesus would not resurrect, that God's plans could not be overcome. The account further explains how the young man in Mark got into the tomb with the guard just outside it.

If the guard being outside the tomb is accepted to be historical, then there must be some explanation as to how the followers of Jesus got Jesus out of the tomb. To perhaps reconcile Matthew's account with Mark, it may be possible that the angel mentioned above who rolled away the stone is no angel, but the same man mentioned in Mark. This must have been a disciple of Jesus or a servant of Joseph. There may have been some kind of earthquake and the guards, being superstitious and already knowing of Jesus, must have been frightened. Combine this with men dressed in white and carrying lanterns, *descending* a hill or mountain and this would have been enough to frighten them to become like *dead men*, i.e. fall to the ground with fear.

Or the alternative and far simpler explanation is that the entire account above was made up by Matthew and that the guards were simply bribed by the followers of Jesus (see under [Matthew 28:15](#) for the likelihood of this). Furthermore, the Roman soldiers seem to be the primary witnesses of the above account and it may well have happened that they made up the story to tell the chief priests and explain how Jesus came out of the tomb, rather than telling the chief priests that they were bribed by the followers of Jesus.

[842] The *young man* in [Mark 16:5](#) has now been converted into an Angel who descends from the heavens in Matthew. They seem to say the same thing in both gospels. Mark's account is to be preferred, since the *young man dressed in white* was simply a young follower of Jesus or a slave/servant of Joseph who had aided in the recovery of Jesus, he probably took the opportunity to explain to the women where Jesus was and how his recovery went.

The young man (Mark) or Angel (Matthew) proceeds to pass on the message of Jesus to the women, who should go and deliver it to the rest of the disciples; that Jesus is now conscious and has gone over to Galilee, outside of Roman jurisdiction where he was a condemned criminal. They should all gather and meet him there as soon as possible. The final part of the verse is a little difficult, since neither Mark, nor the other gospels record Jesus ever telling them to meet him in Galilee after the cross ordeal. Jesus may well have done so, but it isn't recorded anywhere.

[843] The women go off quickly out of fear and great joy, and carry out the commands of the young man/angel. They tell the disciples that Jesus is now conscious and that they should go to meet him in Galilee.

[844] Important Words

For the meaning of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*, *pay homage*) see the note under [Matthew 2:2](#). I have preferred the above as opposed to WEB's translation of *worship*, which I find odd since the same word is translated as *bowed down* a little later in verse 16 when the disciples meet Jesus. It is best to be consistent.

[845] The women quickly leave the tomb after being told by the young man/angel to inform the disciples that Jesus is going to Galilee. But en-route back home, they bump into Jesus who greets them and repeats the instruction of the angels.

[846] Whilst the women were travelling, supposedly back to Jerusalem to inform the disciples that Jesus is alive and well, some of the Roman soldiers who were guarding the

tomb also return to Jerusalem and inform the chief priests of what has happened: the earthquake and the descent of the angel etc. It should come as no surprise that the soldiers returned to the Jewish priests rather than to their own superiors since Pilate gave them over to the priests and put the latter in charge of them.

[847] After being told what has happened, the **priests** immediately put together another council to decide what to do. The heavenly signs seem to make no impact on them; rather they are concerned that the people will believe the soldiers and that Jesus has resurrected from the dead. In turn, they decide that it is best to bribe the soldiers and tell them to go public and announce that the **disciples** of Jesus came at **night**, whilst all the soldiers were **sleeping** on duty and **stole** the **body** of Jesus. And if Pilate hears of this, they the priests will keep the soldiers out of **trouble**.

The above is very unlikely to be historically plausible, since sleeping on duty carried the death penalty for any soldier, and thus for them to announce in public that they had done so would have resulted in them being put to death, and even if the priests could somehow save them, the Roman forces would have been mocked at and put to shame for being incompetent in carrying out a simple task of guarding a tomb. Further difficulties arise as to how the guards were to know that the disciples stole Jesus' body when they were asleep?

As already pointed out above, under **Matthew 28:4**, the story of the earthquake and the angel descending from heaven may in fact have been the invention of the Roman soldiers themselves to cover up the fact that they were bribed by the followers of Jesus into letting him go. The Gospel of Nicodemus states:

“What is this sign which is come to pass in Israel? But Amlas and Caiaphas said: Wherefore are ye troubled? Why weep ye? Know ye not that his disciples gave much gold unto them that kept the sepulchre and taught them to say that an angel came down and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” (14:3)

[848] As the man/angel outside the tomb in 28:7 instructed the women, the disciples go ahead to Galilee and meet Jesus. However, this causes a problem; in the Gospel of Luke (24:49), the disciples are instructed by Jesus to wait and not leave Jerusalem until they are given some sort of power. In Acts, the second part of the Gospel of Luke, they apparently stay in Jerusalem for forty days (Acts 1:3-4). However, according to the above, the disciples leave Jerusalem and go to Galilee! Well which was it? Did they stay in Jerusalem as Luke states or leave as Matthew states?

[849] Important Words

For the translation of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*, *pay homage*) see the note under **Matthew 2:2**.

[850] Some of the **eleven doubted**; these must have been those who were unaware of the plan to save Jesus, and even when they saw Jesus they were in doubt as to whether it was really him or not. Matthew does not indicate which of the disciples doubted, nor does he address their doubt. Instead he immediately moves on to the commissioning; to go and make disciples of the whole world. Some Christians have argued that along with the eleven disciples were others and it was they who doubted, but this cannot be the case since the text does not mention any other group.

It may have happened that some of the disciples initially doubted and were hesitant, or could not believe their eyes, and after speaking with Jesus and maybe even touching him as Luke and John record in the previous chapter, they in turn believed and accepted the fact that he had survived the crucifixion, the details of which are of no interest to the author who omits it all.

[851] The traditional interpretation of this is that all power and authority has now been given to Jesus, i.e. the risen Jesus. He is declaring the point to his disciples now, and he

does so before the commissioning. However, there is a difficulty with this interpretation, since according to the same interpreters, Jesus was God before he visited the world (John 1:1-2). Thus it is rather difficult to give authority and power to someone at a certain point in time who *always had that power* since he was God beforehand; unless it is to be believed that Jesus lost this power whilst on earth. Furthermore, if all power and authority was given over to Jesus, what purpose would there be for the other persons of the Trinity?

Thus the above makes little sense and may well have been the invention of the author who wished to elevate the risen Jesus to an almost god-like status. Historically, it may have occurred that some of the disciples, thinking that Jesus had died, now sought a new leader for his community, but Jesus clarified that he is still alive and thus all authority still belongs to him.

[852] This passage has been used to argue that the message of Jesus was not just for the Jews but for the entire world. The majority of scholars agree with the above translation, that Jesus did mean to **nations** and not to *Gentiles*. The Greek noun is ἐθνη (*ethney*), can mean either nations or Gentiles, but as will be explained below, **nations** is a more accurate translation than *Gentiles*.

Did Jesus command his disciples to preach to the whole world as the above states? Scholars are divided on this; some believing that Jesus meant that the disciples should only preach to Gentiles and no longer to the Jews (Kenton Sparks, Douglas Hare and Daniel Harrington), whilst others argue that it still meant only to the Jews and not to the Gentiles (David Sim). The majority believe it includes both and this is also my opinion.

It has already been shown that Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew is a Jewish prophet whose concern is only for Jews and not for Gentiles, since he does not preach to any Gentile nor does he visit any Gentile Temple. Rather, he refuses at times to even heal Gentiles (Matthew 15:24) and when he did commission his disciples earlier in his ministry, he explicitly commanded them to avoid Gentiles (Matthew 10:5). Furthermore, he is not reported to have had any Gentile followers, and of those whom he did heal, the centurion and the Canaanite woman (Matthew 8:5 and 15:24 respectively), neither one is reported to have converted or followed him.

So the next question which arises is why does Matthew portray Jesus as changing his mind at the end of his ministry? Was it the last straw for the Jews, for their role in the execution of Jesus that led Jesus to expand or even replace the Jews? Yet at the same time, the Gentiles are not free from blame either, since they, too, played a role in the execution; Pilate is the ultimate authority who condemns Jesus, along with the mocking soldiers.

The answer may lie in the position and historical situation of the author himself; that after the Jewish War (70 CE), Matthew's community integrated more with Gentile Christians. Matthew may have seen the benefits of a Gentile mission, and so placed it at the end of his gospel, showing priority to the Jews, but following on is the rest of the world. I believe Matthew did not agree in total with a Gentile mission, as put forward by Paul (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for a fuller explanation), but witnessing the success of the Gentile Church around him he may have felt that if his Church did not open up to a Gentile mission, they would fall far behind in the race for members, which would threaten the future of the Jewish Church. So the door to a Gentile mission would have been opened. Matthew therefore limited the mission to Jews during the lifetime of Jesus, pleasing the already Jewish members of the Church and then opened the door to Gentiles after the resurrection; hence the placing of the instruction in Jesus' mouth after the resurrection and not within his earthly lifetime.

Having said the above, I am *not* convinced that Jesus actually did speak the above words, and it is likely that they were placed in his mouth by the author Matthew himself. The fact that the disciples seem to disobey Jesus and still (in the majority of cases) *avoid* preaching to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19), and that there was opposition to Peter from the Church when he preached to Gentiles (recorded in Acts 11:3) illustrates that the early Church seems oblivious to the above instruction to preach to all nations by Jesus. To add to this, none of them actually baptise anyone **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**. Any references to baptism carried out by the disciples are *only*

done in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 10:48, 19:5, 22:16).

However, the reader should not be surprised if Jesus or any of his disciples did preach to any Gentile; what is more important are the entry requirements into his community (see the notes for the next verse below).

[853] Even if, for some reason, the disciples of Jesus did preach to Gentiles, that too is not a problem. Granted, in the Holy Quran it is recorded that Jesus was a Messenger for the Children of Israel (3:50), but this does not mean that any Gentile who showed interest in Jesus' community was ignored. This is where the verse above comes into play; if any Gentile is to be approached, what is to be preached to them? The most important aspect is to teach the Gentiles what Jesus himself had taught; and throughout his gospel, Matthew has Jesus teach the Torah, attacking opponents for not properly following it, re-interpreting it to suit his times; and never does Jesus abrogate the Law. Thus, preaching to a Gentile was permissible; however, what was an issue in the Jewish Church were the entry requirements. Jesus and his disciples would never have accepted Gentiles into their community without them converting to Judaism; for Gentiles to become true followers of Jesus they would have had to convert to Judaism and follow the Torah Law. This was the difference between Matthew's Jewish Church and Pauline Gentile Churches (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more details).

[854] Luke has a proper introduction, unlike the other gospels. It resembles the typical classical Greek introductions to notable works - Josephus' *Against Apion* is a good example: "In the history of the Antiquities, most excellent Epaphroditus, I believe that I have made sufficiently clear to any who would come upon that work..." As already mentioned in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Luke's sources for his gospel were the Gospel of Mark, Q and other traditions that he may have had access to (referred to as 'L' by scholars). It is these that Luke most likely is referring to in the above verse.

[855] Important Words

ὑπηρέται (*upair-retai*) – Noun, nominative plural, masculine of ὑπηρέτης (*upair-retais*) meaning: *one who acts under orders of another; assistant; helper; attendant; servant* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[856] The identity of **Theophilus** is unknown. The **most excellent** is normally a title for a procurator (a senior officer) of Judea (see Acts 23:26). Yet Luke may be addressing a Roman official or some other figure of high authority. Luke attests to the fact that many writings of Jesus existed when he was writing his gospel, and he is implying here that his version is no doubt superior as he is writing with the knowledge of the other accounts and will give a better and more **orderly** account. Recall Papias' statement regarding Mark's Gospel, that he did not write it in order? (See [Authorship of the Gospel of Mark](#)). It may seem that Luke is criticising that gospel.

[857] **Herod**, known as Herod the Great was appointed Tetrarch (Governor) of the Jews between 40 – 4 BCE. It was in his reign that Jesus was born, making the birth of Jesus not the year 0 as is commonly held, but rather around the year 6 BCE. Although reigning for less than forty years, his rule was not very stable and he himself was close to going insane. He put to death all those who threatened his rule, including most of his immediate family; sons and his most beloved wife, Mariamne. However, within his rule there was some greatness, and the most remarkable being the reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple, which began around 20 BCE and finished long after his death, but then was destroyed in 70 CE by the Roman army in what is referred to as the First Jewish War.

[858] This is the same prophet who is mentioned in the Holy Quran, particularly in the beginning of Chapter 19. He is mentioned and spoken of as an aged prophet who is given the miracle of a son in his old age. The account is similar to the above Lukan narrative, but has subtle differences as will be shown below.

[859] **Abijah** was the descendant of Eleazar, the son of prophet Aaron. He was the chief of one of the twenty-four orders into which the priesthood was divided by prophet David (1 Chronicles 24:10). Zechariah is a descendant of Abijah, and is therefore a Levite priest.

[860] **Elizabeth** was a descendant of Aaron, like Zechariah, and is the mother of John the Baptist. Prophet Aaron's wife is also named Elizabeth (Exodus 6:23), but this is likely to be a coincidence. What is certain is that Luke is beginning his gospel with links with the Old Testament; both parents of John are here described as being from the priestly family and thus paving the way for the introduction of their righteous son.

[861] Important Words

ἀμεμῖτοι (*amemtoi*) – Adjective, nominative plural, masculine of ἀμεμῖτος (*amemtos*) meaning: *a person blameless; without reproach; without blame; perfect in kind; irreproachable* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*).

Commentary

Both Zechariah and his wife are declared to be **blameless** in the above verse; they are without fault and obeyed all the commandments of God, and as a result are declared **righteous before God**. This verse contradicts the common Christian doctrine of original sin; that all of mankind are sinful, born with sin and none is capable of perfection, with the exception of Jesus. It was for this reason they required Jesus' blood sacrifice. As mentioned in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Luke was a Pauline Christian, heavily influenced by the ideas of Paul, who most likely introduced the idea of original sin: "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The concept of *original sin* seems to originate from Paul and not Jesus. Nowhere in the gospels does Jesus even hint that all mankind have sinned, or that they are born in sin. For such a central tenant in the Christian faith to be absent in the sayings of Jesus deals a severe blow and should cast serious doubts as to whether Jesus believed in it or not. He makes no mention of it, but in fact speaks against it in John 15:22 (see commentary of that verse) therefore I believe Paul or another later Christian invented the concept. The reason for its creation was to convince people that they *all* required the sacrifice of Jesus; that none are safe without Jesus' atonement. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under John 1:29.

Having said all of the above, in the verse under comment, Luke seems to display ignorance of Paul's ideas and clearly states that both parents were righteous and blameless before God. He either did not agree or simply copied his sources without thinking to modify them. Either way, Luke is correct, or at least his source is, in stating that both were blameless, for Zechariah was a prophet of God and his wife seems to have been a righteous woman as well.

[862] The righteous couple are now likened to prophet Abraham and his wife Sarah, who both in their old age were childless, but through a miracle of God, were bestowed a child. The Holy Quran confirms this, too, when prophet Zechariah prays to God, stating that his bones have become feeble and his wife is barren and that he desires a successor (19:5-6, 3:37-41).

[863] It just so happens, perhaps by God's plan that the lot falls on Zechariah to go into the Temple shrine to **burn incense**.

[864] While Zechariah is carrying out his duties, he experiences a vision. The angel stands on the **right side of the altar**; the right being a sign of power and is often linked with righteousness, even in Islam. The Jews were given their covenant on the *right side* of the mountain (Holy Quran, 20:81). On the Day of Judgement the people of Paradise will be standing on the *right hand* side (56:9). Jesus even states that he will sit on the *right hand* side of God (Luke 22:70).

According to the Holy Quran, Zechariah prays to God for a successor, for he sees himself getting old and is concerned about the people after him, they not having anyone to lead them when he passes away (Holy Quran 19: 2-7, 3:37-41). It may well have happened that while alone in the shrine, Zechariah prayed to God as outlined in the Holy Quran.

[865] This is very much in line with the Holy Quran, where an angel of God bestowed the glad tidings of a **son** to the aged Zechariah, and as explained above, the Holy Quran speaks of the prayer of Zechariah, which in turn results in the angel of the Lord manifesting itself and reassuring Zechariah that his **prayer is heard**. However, Luke seems to omit any such prayer, and simply has the angel appearing to Zechariah and informing him that his prayer has been heard. What prayer? Either Luke's source did not contain any prayer or he himself removed it for some unknown reason. The son of Zechariah is named John, otherwise known as John the Baptist and Yahya in the Holy Quran.

[866] Important Words

The combination of οὐ μὴ (*ou may*) in the sentence is a double negative, which unlike English denotes a strong negative, hence I made addition of *definitely* in the translation.

Commentary

The descriptions of **John** are of an extremely pious man/prophet of God. It may remind the readers of the vow of the Nazirite. This was a special vow which certain Jews would make, it outlined that they were not to drink any wine and were not to cut their hair either (Numbers 6:1-5). James the brother of Jesus is also described in such terms; see Mark 6:3.

[867] Important Words

The Holy Spirit is spoken about here for the first time in Luke's Gospel, for more details about it, see under Mark 1:8.

[868] As one would expect, Zechariah is punished for his disbelief. As explained in the above note, Luke's version has Zechariah question and doubt the words of the angel, which does not sit well with a blameless prophet (verse 6 above). The Holy Quran differs with the above, in that out of sheer joy with the good news, Zechariah asks God for a commandment as a token of gratitude; whereupon he is then commanded to remain silent and seek solitude for three days, to enable him to pray and give thanks to God (19:11, 3:41).

The Quranic account, even though written much later makes far more sense historically, while Luke's version seems to be not only inaccurate but also incomplete; either his source or he himself wrote that Zechariah was punished for his questioning. It may be that Luke had heard that Zechariah went silent, but was not sure for what reason and may then have tried to imitate the stories of certain Old Testament prophets who were struck dumb by angels: Daniel was struck dumb by an angel (Dan 10:15); as was Ezekiel, in order to prevent him from warning his people (Ezekiel 3:27).

Another difference between Luke's version and The Holy Quran is that in the above, Zechariah was unable to speak for at least nine months until the birth of John the Baptist, as opposed to three days as mentioned in the Quran.

[869] It is uncertain why exactly the people realised or **perceived that Zechariah has seen a vision**, due to his inability to speak. There are no previous records of any priest receiving visions in the Temple and not being able to speak afterwards. Perhaps they understood after he explained to them in some sort of signs? However, explaining a vision in signs itself would have been a major challenge!

[870] Zechariah finishes his duties in the Temple and returns to his wife; the reader is then informed that she **conceived**. Afterwards she goes into **hiding** for unknown reasons,

which is odd and unclear since no Palestinian custom is known to exist. Her words of gratitude are similar to that of Rachel, the wife of prophet Jacob: “She conceived and bore a son, and said, ‘God has taken away my reproach’” (Gen 30:23). Whilst Luke does not explain the reason for Elizabeth’s hiding, it may be due to her and her husband seeking seclusion. Later in verse 40 below, both Zechariah and Elizabeth are in an unknown town in Judea.

[871] This is the **sixth month** of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. Luke is now turning his attention to Mary, the mother of Jesus and is bringing about a parallel in the miraculous birth of John and Jesus. John was born to a barren and aged woman, whilst Jesus was born to a virgin.

[872] The region of **Galilee**, which is often spoken of as being the homeland of Jesus, was at that time ruled by one of the three sons of Herod the Great; Antipas who ruled from 4 BCE to 39 CE. The region was predominantly Jewish, following the victory of the Maccabees in the second century BCE, but was surrounded by Gentile lands. The main means of work in the region was agriculture, particularly in Lower Galilee. Josephus, the famous first-century Jewish historian writes: “...for their soil is universally rich and fruitful, and full of plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation by its fruitfulness” (Josephus, translated by William Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2001, *Jewish Wars*, 3:42). Regarding the Sea of Galilee, Josephus states what grows; “walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty, there are palm trees also, which grow best in hot air...for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruit beyond men’s expectations, but preserves them a great while...” (Josephus, translated by William Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2001, *Jewish Wars*, 3:517-519).

Regarding its residents, the typical Galileans were portrayed rather poorly in Jerusalem circles; where they were often taunted for their lack of knowledge of the Torah and specific details of the Law; for example in Judea work had to cease at midday on the eve of the Passover, but for the Galileans this rule was extended to the entire day due to their lack of knowledge of such details (mPesahim 4:5). Not even famous Galilean Rabbis escaped criticism: Hanina ben Dosa and Yose the Galilean, two first century Rabbis, were rebuked for speaking to an unaccompanied woman and venturing out at night (bErubin 53b and bPesahim 112b).

[873] There is a degree of mystery surrounding the town of **Nazareth**. It is not mentioned at all in the Old Testament, nor by Josephus, who at one point was commander of the Jewish rebellion, and therefore spoke at length about towns and places in Galilee. It may have existed, and if it did, it would have been a very minor town.

[874] **Mary** the mother of Jesus was born to two righteous parents who had decided to dedicate their child to the service of God in the Temple at the age of three (Infancy Gospel of James, 7). However, the Holy Quran contradicts this and records the parents dedicating her before her birth (Holy Quran 3:36). When she reached the age of puberty, it was time for her to leave the Temple since menstruation is considered to be unclean in the Torah (Leviticus 15:19-30), and it would have violated the purity laws in the Temple. In turn it was decided that she get married; lots were cast and it fell on Joseph (Holy Quran 3:45). He was advanced in years (Gospel of the Birth of Mary 6:1) and agreed to marry Mary, who is recorded to have been fourteen years of age (Gospel of the Birth of Mary 5:3). She is considered to be one of the most righteous and pious women in history according to Islamic tradition and even has a chapter of the Holy Quran named after her.

[875] Important Words

The WEB translates the above verse as: *Having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, you highly favoured one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women!”* However, I have opted for a closer translation to the RSV which is based on the more accurate Greek edition of the Bible known as Nestle-Aland. The WEB is closed to the Received Text and therefore adds the last phrase. The Nestle-Aland edition is better known to be more accurate amongst most, if not scholars.

[876] Important Words

λόγος (*logos*) – Noun, dative singular, masculine of λογος (*logos*) meaning: *word; speech; message; command; saying; conversation* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek*

New Testament, 2000).

[877] The angel's greeting is Greek rather than Hebrew. Such a greeting would no doubt have confused and **troubled** an Aramaic speaking Jew. But this is probably not what Luke is trying to portray. However, The Holy Quran speaks on the same subject in Chapter 19:17-19, where an angel appears to Mary as a handsome man, but before he says anything, she herself explains that she *seeks refuge with the Gracious God*.

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the second Caliph of the Promised Messiah states:

“As is apparent from the previous verse it was a mere vision that Mary had seen, and it generally happens that when a person sees a thing in a vision which he does not like in his waking state, he does not like it when he sees it in a vision. When Mary saw the angel standing before her in the form of a man she, being a virtuous young woman, was naturally frightened and perplexed as she would have been frightened and perplexed if she had seen him in her state of wakefulness and it is therefore quite natural that she sought Divine protection from him” (*The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 4, p.1569)

[878] This is in line with the Quranic account, where the angel informs Mary about her child, and also names him: “When the angels said; ‘O Mary! Verily, Allah gives you good news with a Word from Him, his name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honoured in the world and the Hereafter, and of those who are near *to Allah*.’” (3:46)

[879] Important Words

ὑψίστου (*upistou*) – Adjective, genitive singular, masculine of ὑψιστος (*upistos*) meaning: *highest; most exalted; most high* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000*).

Commentary

See under [Mark 3:11](#) for a detailed discussion of the phrase **son of God**.

[880] This is one of the Messianic titles of Jesus, that he was to be from the progeny of prophet David (2 Samuel 7:14-16). And was to be king, as the word Messiah points to. See under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details of the coming Messiah in Judaism.

[881] The angel proceeds to explain the roles and function of Jesus the Messiah; thus far, the angel prophesies that he will be righteous and close to God and that he will be given the throne of David. **The Davidic throne** was to be a special attribute of the Messiah; that he would be a king modelled on the greatest king of Israel, David. In the above verse, Jesus is also to reign over the **house of Jacob** for ever; Jacob being the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus the above would imply the Messiah's Jewishness and scope of his mission; to teach and preach to the Jews who were of the house of Jacob/Israel. Even though Luke was himself a Gentile, it seems that he simply copied his source without much thought.

[882] Important Words

δουλή (*douley*) – Noun, nominative singular, feminine, meaning: *slave; servant* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000*). It is sometimes said that within Islam, Muslims are often referred to as slaves or servants of God, while in Christianity they are referred to as children of God. Yet, as can be seen above, this is not the case, as often Jews and Christians refer to themselves as slaves of God, above and see Rom 1:1 as well.

Modern translations of the Bible often change the word to *handmaiden* or *servant*. Yet the Greek word used was primarily meant for **slaves**. In antiquity, servants did not really exist, most servants or workers of the rich were slaves and this is exactly what Mary and Paul (Romans 1:1) meant when calling themselves *slaves of God*.

[883] After being reassured by the angel, Mary herself out of joy exclaims that she is the **slave of God**, and that she is fully content with the will of God. The account is similar to the Quranic account, where an angel visits Mary and gives her the glad tidings of a son as well (19:22).

[884] Excited with the news of the angel, Mary quickly gets up and departs to seek out **Elizabeth** her cousin, most likely to confirm the news that she had received.

[885] In this verse Luke is preparing the reader for the introduction to the Messiah. The baby John recognises the voice of the mother of the Messiah and **jumps** in his mother's **womb**. Perhaps the baby simply kicked, and this was linked with hearing the voice of Mary.

[886] Important Words

κύριου (kuriou) – Noun, genitive singular, masculine of κύριος (kurios) meaning: *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house. Also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from 14 years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The word (much like in English) is also applied to God. Many Christian interpreters will make the mistake to assume that all references of *lord* immediately refer to God and thus when Jesus is called *lord*, he is now synonymous with God, but as explained in the meaning of the word, this is clearly not the case. Jesus himself uses the word when speaking about the master of a house (Matt 24:45). Furthermore in the Genesis Apocryphon, found in the Dead Sea caves, Noah's father Lamech, is addressed by his wife: 'Oh my brother, Oh my Lord!' (1QapGen 2:9).

Commentary

It was Mary who had received a vision regarding her own child. Elizabeth thus far hasn't been made aware of any vision nor the fact that Mary was pregnant, yet immediately after Mary's greeting, she cries out how blessed **the mother of my lord** is! The sequence of events seem awkward, it is more likely that Mary came and spoke to Elizabeth at some length, informing her of the vision of the angel and while speaking, perhaps the baby in Elizabeth's womb kicked, causing his mother to cry out in joy. However, this will still not explain why she would then ask Mary of the purpose of her visit as the above indicates. Perhaps Elizabeth herself had also received a revelation or dream that Mary, too, was pregnant with the Messiah, which may explain how she knows so much without Mary mentioning anything to her yet.

[887] The above assumes the reader is aware of some sort of vision or dream received by Elizabeth, informing her that Mary, too, was pregnant, with the Messiah. However, Luke seems to omit any reference of a vision; if Elizabeth did receive a vision or dream, why does Luke omit it? Either he himself was unaware, or the above are the words of Luke himself who wished only to elevate the status of Mary and Jesus far beyond that of Zechariah and Elizabeth, and intending to keep the reader interested only in Jesus; even though the purpose of Mary's visit seems to have been to enquire about the state of Elizabeth!

[888] In joy, Mary, too, cries out and begins a canticle or hymn where she praises God for all His help and blessings. The Lord in this verse would refer to God and not to Jesus as some Christians have argued, since the subject of the praise in the next few verses is God.

[889] Important Words

μακαριοῦσιν (makarousin) – Verb, future active indicative, third person plural of μακαρίζω (makarizo) meaning: *regard as happy; think of as blessed; consider fortunate* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[890] Mary continues with her hymn, which cannot be ascertained whether it originated from Mary or some other source attributing it to Mary. The latter is more likely since verse 48 speaks of the depression (**humble state**) of God's slave, which would not entirely fit the life of Mary since she would not have experienced depression in her short life thus far. As such, attributing the hymn to Elizabeth is more likely since she probably did experience some degree of depression as she in her old age was still childless.

Much like in Islam, God is to be loved and **feared**. Muslims often go back and forth between hope and fear of God and this is also supported by the above hymn.

[891] Important Words

παῖδος (paidos) – Noun, genitive singular, masculine of παῖς (pais) meaning: *child; either boy or girl; servant; attendant* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). I have opted for the more literal translation as opposed to *servant* by the WEB translation.

[892] The hymn ends with God blessing **Israel**. The final verses of the hymn seem unrelated to the blessings received by Mary, or by Elizabeth for that matter, and as such it is unlikely to have been sung or recited by Mary in the above context. It is more likely to have been a hymn of the early church, which Luke may have had access to and simply inserted it into his gospel above. The hymn seems to have origins possibly in the Jewish church, since it has strong Jewish tones; God aided his child Israel as was promised to Abraham in the Torah, and as such would have suited Matthew better than Luke, the latter being a Gentile Christian himself.

[893] Mary visited Elizabeth in the sixth month of her pregnancy and then stayed with her for another **three months**, i.e. left her after the birth of John the Baptist, which would make sense since she would have been there in Elizabeth's time of need.

[894] Important Words

The above translation differs slightly from other Bible translations; the WEB for example translates the second part of the verse as *and they would have named him Zechariah after his father*. I have diverged, since there is no indication in the Greek of doubt or a future reference. I have opted for a strong literal translation instead, which omits any reference like *would have named*, rather it is simply *they were calling*.

Commentary

Circumcision is a practice of the Jews as well as Muslims. It recalls the covenant which God made with the prophet Abraham in Gen 17:10. The practice of performing the ritual on the eighth day is laid out in Lev 12:3.

[895] As the Quran (19:8) suggests, God Himself named the child. The neighbours wished to name the **child after his father**, but Elizabeth was informed by her husband, Zechariah, that God had revealed the name of the son, and had chosen John.

[896] It was a common practice to name children after saints and prophets. Zechariah's immediate family may not have had anyone named John, but other priestly members did (Neh 12:13, 42 and 1 Macc 2:1-2). The idea is also reiterated in the Holy Quran where God informs Zechariah that no one has been called this name before, most likely meaning in his own family (19:8).

[897] Zechariah is reported to have been struck dumb earlier in verse 1:20, i.e. that he was unable to speak, but the above indicates that Zechariah is both deaf and dumb, since they use gestures to communicate with him; however, afterwards in verse 1:64 only his tongue is opened and he is able to speak, but no mention is made of his hearing. It may

be that Luke had access to a number of traditions on the above story and he put them all together not noticing the subtle discrepancies between them. If this is the case, it casts a small doubt on the claim that the gospel writers were inspired to write what they wrote, as can be seen, human errors seem to have crept in from the very first chapter of Luke.

[898] Important Words

ἐπεσκέψατο (epeskepsato) – Verb, aorist indicative, 3rd person singular of ἐπισκεπτομαι (episkemtymai) meaning: *go to help; look after; visit; come to help; be concerned about* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[899] After the child is born and named, suddenly Zechariah's tongue is released from the curse of the angel as outlined earlier in Luke (1:20) and he is able to speak. He then praises God in a canticle or hymn, much like the one attributed to Mary earlier (see under [Luke 1: Mary's Visit to Elizabeth](#)). His hymn also possesses Jewish tones and begins with praising the God of Israel who has helped and relieved his people. Thus far, the hymn seems to be in answer to the prayer of Zechariah in the Temple which is not mentioned in the gospels, but only in the Holy Quran (see under [Luke 1:13](#)).

[900] The **horn of salvation** may well be a symbol of power and might (Ezekiel 29:21) John or Yayha was therefore described as a powerful and mighty Prophet from the start.

[901] Zechariah now speaks of salvation from Israel's enemies and all those who hate them.

[902] The Holy covenant or promise of God to Abraham is likely to be the one mentioned in Genesis 22:17: "I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." From amongst his progeny would come Prophets and mighty people, whom John/Yayha would be one of the foremost.

[903] Zechariah now turns to his son and speaks to him being the precursor to the Lord, to **prepare His ways**. This must refer to John/Yayha being the Prophet to declare the dawn of the Kingdom of God, i.e. the dawn of Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary. This would be the plan of God, who first sent John to the Jews to aid in their preparation for the coming of His Messiah.

[904] The hymn continues with further descriptions of the power and might of his promised son John. The purpose and mission of John was far more than what the gospels depict, which was to solely identify Jesus as the Messiah. Rather, John does far more and fulfilled his mission as not only the precursor of the Messiah, but also as a great Prophet of Israel who preached and baptised the Baptism of Repentance; see [Luke 3: 7-9](#) for more details.

[905] Gaius Julius Octavianus (63 BCE – 14 CE), later known as **Augustus**, was Emperor of Rome from 31 BCE till his death in 14 CE. He was favourable to the Jews as long as they paid the Roman Empire taxes.

[906] Luke now moves off the topic of John the Baptist to focus on Jesus. Like Matthew, he too has an account of the birth of Jesus; however, it is very different from Matthew's version. Whilst Matthew has Joseph intending to divorce Mary, and receiving a dream where he is instructed not to, Luke seems to be completely unaware of Joseph's intention, and simply has Joseph and his family travel to Bethlehem to give birth to the child there.

It is possible to reconcile the above accounts; by placing the story of Matthew *before* Luke. However, in doing so, what you're doing is basically creating an alternative gospel, a version matching neither Matthew nor Luke. The Christian who does this will also be forced to admit that neither gospels are therefore complete, which in turn makes it difficult to believe that they were written by inspired writers.

[907] His full name being Publius Sulpicius, he was appointed the **governor** of **Syria** in 6 CE. Thus the above account of the birth of Jesus must have taken place, according to Luke, after 6 CE. However, Matthew has Jesus born ten years earlier in the reign of Herod the Great who died around 6 BCE. This is a discrepancy which cannot be reconciled.

[908] Luke's universal census has been questioned by many scholars. Many claim that he may have confused certain registrations by the Emperor, e.g. the tax registration which occurred in 6 or 7 CE according to Josephus. The famous Dead Sea Scrolls and the historical Jesus scholar, Geza Vermes, outline five arguments *against* the historical accuracy of Luke's census: 1) There exist no Roman sources which mentioned such a census under Augustus; 2) Roman authority was limited in the lands of Herod the Great who would have controlled Judea, therefore any census would not have been permitted; 3) The duty of Joseph to travel to the land of his forefather David would have been required under Roman law which would have required him to register in his own homeland in Nazareth; 4) There would be no reason for Joseph to have taken his fiancé or wife or any other member of the family since he, being the head of the family, was sufficient; and 5) The absence of such a census by the Jewish historian Josephus seriously undermines its credibility (*Who's Who in the Age of Jesus*, 2005, p 218).

A further problem would be the fact that Luke makes out that the census involved people travelling to their *own city* as verse 4 points out. Prophet David lived some forty generations before Joseph, around a thousand years earlier. This would have meant that people were to remember their ancestry from at least forty generations before and then travel to where they had lived at that time. Can the reader imagine being ordered to return to the city where their ancestors lived forty generations earlier? This is what Luke is depicting Joseph to have done. Moreover, David would have had tens of thousands of descendants at that time, which would have implied that all these people were to travel and register in the tiny village of Bethlehem. And what was the purpose of Rome demanding people to travel to cities of their aged ancestors, a rule which would have resulted in unnecessary chaos? Also, why did Joseph stop at his ancestor David? Why not go to the whole town of David's great-great-great grandfather?

Two other scholars Sanders and Davies have outlined an alternative theory for the mistake; they claim that Luke confused the possible riots which may have occurred at the time of the death of a governor and the riots which may have ensued when the tax registration occurred ten years later in 6 or 7 CE (*Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 1989, p 41).

[909] Joseph takes his pregnant wife along with him for the journey, and as a result of the registration the inns and other resting places in Bethlehem seem to have filled up quickly. The question relating to the date of Jesus' birth may be useful to comment upon at this point. The supposed date of the birth of Jesus being the 25th December has long been suspected to be inaccurate; which is true, since it was at a much later date when Christians began to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

A very important note is to remember that there is no indication of when in the year Jesus was born. Nor is there any indication in the Bible that the early disciples, early Church fathers or anyone early celebrated the birth of Jesus. This therefore serves a severe blow to those Christians celebrating Christmas. Why celebrate something their founder, nor anyone after him celebrated?

Numerous theories have been put forward of how and why the 25th December was chosen. The 25th December was the birth of the Roman Pagan god Mithras: the Roman Catholic writer, Mario Righetti, writes that it was to facilitate and aid the bringing in of the pagan masses to the Roman Church, as the latter found it convenient to merge the pagan festivals and link it to the birth of Christ (*Manual of Liturgical History*, 1955, Vol. 2, p.67).

The first reference to the date of birth of Jesus was around 200 CE, Clement of Alexandria complained that certain Egyptian theologians curiously assigned, not the year alone, but the day of Christ's birth, placing it on 25 Pachon (20th May) in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus (Stromata I.21) In Cyprus, at the end of the fourth century, Epiphanius asserts that Christ was born on 6th January (Hær., li, 16, 24 in P.G., XLI, 919, 931). Around the same time, Chrysostom preached an important sermon in 386 CE, in which he tried to unite Antioch in celebrating Christ's birth on 25th December, part of the community having already kept it on that day for at least ten years.

Thus a certain evolutionary theme can be seen, where the dates of Jesus' birth varied a great deal. The Holy Quran is more specific than the gospel accounts in stating that the birth of Jesus was most likely to be in the summer:

"And the pains of child-birth drove her (Mary) to a trunk of a palm tree. She said; 'Would that I had died before this and been forgotten and out of sight!' Then cried out to her from below her; 'Do not grieve, your Lord has placed under you a stream. And shake towards yourself the trunk of the palm tree, it will let fall upon you fresh ripe dates.'" (19: 24-26).

The fact that ripe dates do not grow in the middle of winter, but rather during the summer months points to the birth date being in the summer months. This is probably historically more accurate, as later in Luke shepherds were *camping* (verse 8) outside in the country while watching their sheep, which would have been less likely to have happened in winter when it would get very cold outside.

[910] ἀγραιοῦντες (*araulouvtes*) – verb present active participle nominative plural masculine of ἀγραιοῦν (*agrauleo*) meaning: *live in the open, out of doors* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*). I have opted for the above translation as opposed to the WEB's translation of *abiding in the field* which is also correct. However, the word has a stronger emphasis on actually living, i.e. camping.

[911] After the child is born, Luke then moves onto the account of the witnessing of the **shepherds**, as opposed to *Magi* in Matthew. They were outside **camping** close to where their sheep were grazing, keeping an eye on them.

[912] Scholars such as Sanders and Davies have pointed out that the term **Saviour** is borrowed from Hellenistic sources. This title was often given to great men like Ptolemy Epiphanius or Julius Caesar (*Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 1989, p 278). Luke is intentionally applying the title to Jesus; it was first applied to God in 1:47 and now bestowed on Jesus.

[913] **Important Words**

χριστὸς κύριος (*Christos Kurios*) – Christ lord, the absence of any definite article goes against many translations which translate the phrase as: *Christ the Lord*.

[914] After witnessing the magnificent vision of the angels, the shepherds wander into **Bethlehem** looking for the child saviour to ensure that what they were told by God in the vision is in fact true. They manage to find the baby Jesus along with his parents, and announce to them all what they experienced.

As already mentioned earlier, the birth date of Jesus was declared to be December 25th by the later Christians to aid in the acceptance of Gentiles into the Church. This is not the only similarity between the biblical Jesus and Gentile gods; the date December 25th was also the birth of the Sun, with which the god Mithra is associated (Franz Cumont, *Mysteries of Mithra*, p.167). Regarding the birth of the god Mithra, Cumont discusses the tradition, which states that the Generative Rock on which an image was worshipped in

the temples, was what had given birth to Mithra next to a river, under a tree and that shepherds alone had witnessed the miracle (Ibid. p.131). Luke might have heard of traditions indicating that the birth of Jesus was witnessed by shepherds. However, the traditions may have come from the birth narratives of the pagan god Mithra.

[915] There are also difficulties with the above account; the identification of the Messiah of Israel would not have gone unnoticed by the Jews. Had the shepherds been informed by God that the Messiah was born, they would have announced it to all the Jews, and the child would not have been ignored growing up by the general public as the gospels depict.

When the shepherds tell Mary and Joseph of their vision, Mary remains quiet, absorbing the information and pondering over it. Yet a few days later, when the baby Jesus is taken to the Temple to be circumcised, a righteous man blesses the child and announces his status to the parents, at which both parents wonder in *amazement* (2:33).

Riddled with problems, it is more likely that the above account was probably an invention of the author Luke. The birth of Jesus may well have been witnessed by some shepherds, but the vision and announcement that he would be the Messiah would have been made up. It is also strange that the entire event is missing from the birth narrative of Matthew, likewise is the birth narrative of Matthew missing from Luke. They are completely different; everything in Matthew is missing in Luke and vice versa. If the two authors were recording the historical birth of Jesus, why are there no similarities? It is possible for Christians to harmonise the two accounts; to argue that *both occurred*, first the shepherds came and witnessed the birth, then the Magi. However, by doing so, in effect what they are doing is creating a third gospel birth narrative, which is different from both Matthew and Luke, and by doing so, the Christians are stating that both gospel narratives are incomplete. In reality, the differences can simply be explained by the fact that both authors had access to different birth traditions.

[916] After the story of the shepherds, Joseph and Mary wait **eight days** and then take Jesus up to Jerusalem to be **circumcised**. Circumcision recalls the covenant which God made with the prophet Abraham in Gen 17:10. The practice of performing the ritual on the eighth day is laid out in Lev 12:3.

[917] Luke talks about **their purification**, using the plural and thus implying either Joseph and Mary, or Jesus and Mary. However, there is no requirement in the Law for the child to be purified, nor anything about the husband either, but only the mother (Lev 12). The Law states that the mother who has just given birth is unclean and therefore should not touch any holy thing for seven days if she gives birth to a son, and fourteen days if she gives birth to a daughter. Luke, being a Gentile himself most likely misunderstood the Law and thought that either Joseph and Mary became unclean, or Jesus and Mary.

[918] Luke mentions the practice of consecrating or dedicating the firstborn to God in the Torah (Ex 13:2); however, the firstborn had to be redeemed (Ex 11:13) and the cost to redeem the male child was five shekels (Num 18:15-16). But Luke makes no mention of this and seems to have got much of the Law confused, as he speaks about presenting the child to the Lord, a custom which does not exist in the Torah or Mishnah.

[919] This sacrifice was for Mary and not the redemption payment mentioned above. The purification Law is outlined in Leviticus 12. Joseph and Mary seem to sacrifice a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons, which according to the Law can only be sacrificed if the parents cannot afford a lamb. Thus coming back to the story of the Magi, who gave the parents very expensive gifts, it is strange that they are now unable to afford a lamb to sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a fundamental element in both Judaism and Christianity. For a detailed analysis of sacrifice and how it was borrowed from the pagans, see under [Mark 11:15](#).

[920] The identity of **Simeon** is unknown. He seems to be a pious Jew who was especially close to God. The **Holy Spirit** being upon him simply means that he was a very pious

man, and that God was with him.

[921] Driven by the Holy Spirit, Simeon goes into the Temple, perhaps himself being unaware of why he went in, but most likely he felt an urge to do so. He witnesses Joseph and Mary carrying the child to have him circumcised. Simeon thus somehow recognises the baby Jesus, or is inspired that this is to be the Messiah of Israel.

[922] **Important Words**

ἔθνη (ethnē) – Noun, genitive plural, neuter of ἔθνος (ethnos) meaning: *number of people living together; company; body of men; nation; people* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*). The WEB translation is correct to have it as **nations** as opposed to *Gentiles* which the RSV prefers. It can mean Gentiles as well, but I have opted to translate it as *nations*. Luke is quoting Isa 49:6: “I will give you as a light to the nations,” which adds to the reason why *nation* is a better translation of ἔθνος in the verse above.

[923] Simeon comes and picks up the child, the parents most likely allowing him, seeing that he was an elder and devout worshipper, and thought that he wished to bless the child. Recognising that the child would be the Messiah, Simeon glorifies God and thanks Him for fulfilling His promise; that He would not let Simeon die until he had seen the Messiah. As already explained under [Mark 1:1](#), the primary aim of the Messiah according to the Jews in the first century, was to bring salvation to the Jews themselves. According to the majority of the Jews, the Messiah would wage war against the enemies of Israel and defeat them, thus glorifying Israel and showing the nations of the world Israel’s glory.

[924] Unless his father and mother suffered from some sort of amnesia, they should have recalled the words the angel spoke to Mary in [Matthew 1:21](#) and the message of the shepherds in [Luke 2:10-19](#). However, they seem completely oblivious to it. For this reason, many scholars believe that this whole passage existed in a tradition, completely unrelated to Luke Chapter 1, since it shows no awareness of any angelic visitation or announcements by any shepherds. Historically, it is not possible that both the account of the shepherds and the above blessing by Simeon could have happened. As argued in the previous chapter, it is more likely that the witnessing of the shepherds was either the creation of Luke or an exaggeration.

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[926] Luke seems to want to convince his readers that all sorts of people bore witness to the Messiah’s birth. In the above account, first Simeon does so, and also a **prophetess**. The above may well have happened but in a more simplistic fashion; Simeon may have recognised the child and began to bless it and while doing so Anna walked in and seeing what was going on decided to join in with the blessing as well.

Again, like the account of the shepherds, it is very unlikely that Anna began to announce to all that the Messiah was born, since the baby Jesus would not have been ignored throughout his childhood as depicted by all four gospels. If the general public had discovered the birth of the Messiah, there would have been celebrations and possibly even trouble if the Romans discovered the cause of the celebrations. Furthermore, according to Matthew, Herod still wished to kill the child, thus publicly announcing the birth of the Messiah in the Temple of Jerusalem would have been very dangerous. This all illustrates that both Matthew and Luke had completely different traditions, and were likely to be oblivious of each other’s work.

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[927] After the baby Jesus is circumcised in the Temple the parents return to Galilee to their home in Nazareth. Again, it seems that Luke is completely unaware of the supposed flight to Egypt and the return recorded in Matthew's Gospel. Instead, he assumes that Joseph and Mary had always lived in Nazareth.

[928] Something is missing here, according to the Gospel of Matthew, in Jesus' infancy, he spent a good few years in Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). Luke seems to be completely unaware of this, even though he admits and boasts in his prologue that he wrote an *orderly account* (Luke 1:3). It simply shows that he had no idea of certain traditions or that Matthew made up the whole Egypt incident.

[929] The **Passover** or Pesach took place on the fourteenth of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar. According to Jewish tradition, it was when Moses was rejected and persecuted by Pharaoh, that one of the signs given to Moses was the killing of the Egyptian firstborn. The Israelites were instructed by Moses to slaughter a lamb and sprinkle some of its blood on their doorsteps. When the Angel of Death passed through the land, it saw the blood on the doorstep and would *pass over* (in Hebrew, Pesach) that house and carry on till it found a house of an Egyptian, which had no blood, and kill their firstborn child. After this dreadful sign, Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Israelites go. For hundreds of years afterwards, the main ritual of the Passover was to bring a lamb to the Temple in Jerusalem to sacrifice, in remembrance of the families in Egypt who did the same on their last day there. In the Temple, the lamb was sacrificed by a Priest, some of the meat he kept and the rest was returned to the family to eat.

[930] **Textual Variant**

Whilst the majority of manuscripts read as above, some weaker ones, including the Codex Alexandrinus and the Received Text, from which the King James Version copies, do not state that it was Jesus' *parents* who knew not, rather it was *Joseph and his mother*. It was probably to safeguard the belief of the virgin birth.

[931] Large groups of families would often travel together, as they had to travel through the inhospitable land of Samaria. In order to protect themselves against roadside robbers, it was often safer to go in large numbers. It was after a **day's journey** that the parents realise that Jesus is not with them and they return to **Jerusalem looking for him**.

[932] A full **three days** later they find Jesus sitting in the Temple listening and questioning the teachers. Luke does not explain what the child Jesus did for food or shelter; it may be that he took shelter among some of the teachers and ate with them. His depiction is that from a young age he was wise and very interested in spiritual matters. This depiction of young heroes is not new amongst ancient writers: Josephus, too, boasts that "While still a young boy, about 14 years old, I won universal applause for my love of letters; inasmuch that the chief priests and leading men of the city used to constantly come to me for precise information about some particular in our ordinances" (Life 9). In fact the Apocryphal Infancy Story of Thomas goes further than Luke above and talks about Jesus putting the elders in the Temple to silence (19:2).

Jesus' counter-part in the latter days, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, too, was known for his in-depth knowledge and studying habits from a young age:

"By the time he was 16 he had also already studied intently both the Bible and the Vedas of the Hindus and the commentaries of Christian writers. He annotated them as carefully as he did the Quran. 'I have given serious thought to the objections they raise against Islam.' He told a friend. 'In my room I have collected the objections raised against Muhammad. They number nearly 3000' " (Iain Adamson, *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian*, 1989, p.20).

[933] After finding the child in the Temple, the parents rush to him and rebuke him for his actions. The child Jesus answers back, asking where they sought him, for it was

necessary that he be in his **Father's house**. It may be appropriate to mention this similarity with Jesus's counter-part in the latter days, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him), whenever anyone asked his father about his whereabouts at a young age, his father would say. "You will find him in the Mosque". He has become a 'Maseeter' a person who virtually lives in the Mosque.

[934] It is unclear why Joseph and Mary failed to **understand** the rather simple saying of Jesus. Was it that Jesus referred to God as Father? He probably learnt that from the Jewish teachers in the Temple, since referring to God as one's Father was common in Jewish traditions. In the Talmud it is reported that: "The ancient Hasidim spent an hour in recollection before praying in order to direct their hearts towards their Father in Heaven" (mBer 5:1). Honi the Circle Drawer was a Jewish saint in the first century BCE; he, too, is spoken of in the Talmud: "When the world was in need of rain, the rabbis used to send school children to him (Honi), who seized the train of his cloak and said to him, Abba, Abba, give us rain! He said to God: Lord of the Universe, render a service to those who cannot distinguish between the Abba who gives rain and the Abba who does not" (bTaan.23b). The Essenes also referred to God as Father in their Hymns (Dead Sea Scrolls, The Thanksgiving Hymn, 7:35). Even in the Gospel accounts, the Jews proclaim to Jesus that their father is God (John 8:41).

Did the parents fail to understand the statement that it was necessary for Jesus to be in the Temple? Should this have been much of a surprise though, since the reason for the visit to Jerusalem was to visit the Temple? If the child Jesus was left behind or if he got lost, it would have been natural for him to go and sit in the Temple waiting for his parents.

Even though the statements of the child Jesus when found seem rather remarkable or perhaps strange, the above account cannot be rejected to be historically implausible. Large groups of pilgrims could travel together, and the parents of Jesus may well have assumed that Jesus was with all his cousins. Once they discovered that he was not with them, they would have returned to Jerusalem to search for him and found him in the Temple, perhaps under the guardianship of one of the priests or teachers. This would have naturally been the place the child would have sought protection, as the main purpose of the visit was to sacrifice in the Temple and pray there.

[935] **Tiberius** Claudius Nero was the successor of the Emperor Augustus. He ruled from 14 to 37 CE and as such ruled over the Jews during the times of John the Baptist and Jesus. Other than this, there is little involvement of Tiberius in the New Testament, besides his appointing Pilate as Governor of Judea. Most commentators indicate that the dating Luke has above is roughly 28-29 CE; that being fifteen years after the death of Tiberius' predecessor.

[936] **Pontius Pilate** was governor of Judea, and was ruler from 26 CE to 36 CE; see under [Mark 15:2](#) for details about Pilate.

[937] **Herod Antipas** was the second son of Herod the Great; see under [Mark 6:14](#) for more details about him.

[938] **Annas** was one of the most influential high priests in the first century: the majority of his family afterwards also held the position. However, during the ministry of Jesus, it was Caiaphas who was high priest. Under Jewish Law there can only be one high priest at a time and not two as misunderstood by Luke above. It is likely that after his high-priesthood, Annas remained as an advisory figure to his son-in-law Caiaphas. The Gospel of John speaks of Jesus being brought and interrogated by Annas rather than the Sanhedrin in the Synoptic (first three) gospels.

[939] Joseph **Caiaphas** was the son-in-law of Annas as mentioned above, and was the longest serving high priest in the first century (18-36 CE). He plays a crucial role in the latter life of Jesus in Jerusalem, heading the opposition in having Jesus condemned to the cross.

[940] Like the author Matthew, Luke too had access to the Gospel of Mark when he was writing his own and he copied from Mark 1:2-6 in the above. See notes under Mark for details regarding the above verses.

[941] Luke, like Matthew, records the tirade of John the Baptist, the warning is almost identical to that of Matthew's Gospel (see notes under Matthew 3:7-10 for an explanation of the passage), indicating that both Luke and Matthew were copying from the same source, often referred to as Q by scholars. The difference between the two seems to be that in Luke the ones receiving John's wrath are the general crowds instead of the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew. This makes little sense, since the purpose of John coming from the wilderness was to preach to the Jewish crowds, but in Luke he seems to be rebuking them for coming to him!

It is likely that Luke understood his source differently from Matthew. Whilst the former has John rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to investigate his activity, Luke probably understood John to have rebuked certain groups among the Jews who came to be baptised but still held on to their bad practices and habits. Without regret and reform, repentance is pointless, and it may have been such people who wished not to give up their habits but still be baptised by John in the hope that his baptism would remove their sins.

[942] From the above, it seems that the baptism of John meant nothing, what was more important was the reformation of the Jews. The general crowds were told to distribute their wealth; those possessing more than one shirt to give to one not having any, and likewise those who have enough food for themselves and their families should feed those who do not.

[943] **Tax collectors** were Jews who were assigned by the Romans to collect the toll taxes from the people and give them to the Romans. The above hints that some may have got the reputation of collecting more than what was required and pocketing the remainder for themselves, hence John's words of advice.

[944] These would not be Roman **soldiers**, since there were no legions posted in Palestine at this time. These are most likely to be soldiers of Herod Antipas.

[945]

John is teaching the basic principles of generosity and care for others. To the general public he instructs them to share and make financial sacrifices and help one another. To the tax collectors, he instructs them to be fair and not to pocket any extra money they receive or demand from the people. To the soldiers, John tells them to be less severe and to be grateful for what they earn. It is only after they correct themselves and give up all bad habits that their repentance will be accepted by God.

[946] From the Lukan text it seems as though the general crowds were waiting in anticipation of the Messiah, and perhaps thought that John the Baptist was him. This may have been the case, yet it is probably more likely that the above verse was created by Luke to bring in the reply of John that he is not the Messiah.

[947]

Verses 16 and 17, identical to Matthew's Gospel (verses 3:11-12), showing that both Matthew and Luke were copying from the Q source. See notes in Matthew for details over the commentary of the verses.

[948] In Luke's Gospel, the account of Herod's dealing with John occurs close to the beginning after John's Messianic preaching. While in Mark and Matthew, it occurs later. Like the author Matthew, Luke is using the gospel of Mark as his source, however Luke doesn't bother retaining much of what Mark records, see under Mark 6:17-29 for a fuller picture of what happened between Antipas and John the Baptist.

Luke though, includes further crimes of Herod which are omitted by Mark and Matthew. John criticised Herod Antipas not only for his marriage, but also for the evil which he did. But the problem is, Herod Antipas is not really known to have done any particular evil before his dealings with John the Baptist.

[949] Textual Variant

While the majority of manuscripts read the above, the Codex Bezae, a fifth century manuscript reads: '*You are my son the beloved, today I have begotten you*'. This variant reading is rare and late and is most likely incorrect, however, many scholars have defended this variant reading since it is the more difficult reading and therefore might be the original. They argue that the variant reading was a quotation of Psalms 2:7 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.210).

Another reason why the variant reading is a forgery is because it states "*today I have begotten you*". By stating the word *today*, it means that Jesus was not the son of God at the beginning as John states, but rather only *after* the baptism. Scribes were known for their modifications to the texts whilst copying and often they would try to harmonise the four gospel accounts, attempting to reduce the discrepancies (Cambry Pardee, *Scribal Harmonization in Greek Manuscripts of the Synoptic Gospels from the Second to the Fifth Century*, 2016). Thus a change from '*today I have begotten you*' to '**in you I am pleased**' would make perfect sense, since the scribe is now harmonising the above to match both Mark and Matthew.

However, other scholars have argued the other way round. It is true that the earliest Greek manuscripts read as above (**in you I am pleased**), but numerous church fathers from the second century (before any of the surviving Greek manuscripts) quote the variant reading (*today I have begotten you*). Furthermore, would Christian scribes have a reason for changing the verse from *today I have begotten you* to **in you I am pleased**? Yes! One particular scholar argues that some early Christians disagreed with the majority of Christians: Some believed that Jesus was not born god or born divine, but rather 'adopted' by God at his baptism, hence the *today* in the variant reading. A later Christian scribe thought this was incorrect and thought to change it to the above more common reading (Bart Ehrman, *Scribes Who Changed the Voice at Jesus Baptism? Oct 19, 2015*, <https://ehрманblog.org/scribes-who-changed-the-voice-at-jesus-baptism/>).

Commentary

The above text is a copy of Mark 1:9-11, see notes under Mark for details.

[950] Like the Gospel of Matthew, Luke too provides a genealogy. He begins with making it clear to his readers that Jesus is *not* the actual son of Joseph, and thus he adds as **was supposed** to his text.

[951] The genealogy of Luke differs to Matthew's in many places: Looking at verse 13 in Matthew; it states *Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, and Abiud fathered Eliakim, and Eliakim fathered Azor*, while the equivalent is in verse 26 and 27 of Luke: **Zerubbabel fathered Rhesa fathered Joanan fathered Joda fathered Josech**. The difference in the number of people mentioned in the genealogies is also vast. Luke's list almost doubles that of Matthew's and even the name of the father of Joseph differs in both accounts; Matthew saying *Jacob* while Luke says **Heli**.

Numerous attempts have tried to explain these differences; one made popular by Annius of Viterbo (1490 CE) is that Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph, while Luke's is of Mary, but that isn't based on anything. Luke's genealogy doesn't even mention Mary, and Matthew's ends with Joseph as well. Another popular suggestion is that one of the genealogies was of Joseph's actual father and the other was of Joseph's step-father. However, this again is only conjecture and cannot be supported by any internal or external evidence. The two accounts above cannot be reconciled, implying that both authors had very different sources to make their genealogies, and were not divinely inspired as

believed by many Christians.

There is another, rather notable difficulty with both genealogies; that being, they both are the genealogies of Jesus' step-father, Joseph, not of Jesus himself. Both authors seem to fail to recognise the problem; that Jesus is not the direct descendant of David or Abraham, or if he was, through Mary, the above genealogies do not show it and are therefore rather pointless.

[952] Luke discusses the temptation of Jesus very much like [Matthew 4:1-11](#). His account is very similar, both of which seem to be using the same source, i.e. Q.

[953] **Textual Variant**

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *but by every word of God* at the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[954] **Textual Variant**

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds: *Get behind me Satan, it is written; The Lord your God...* While the above translation is based on two very early manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. The Received text variant was made by a later Christian scribe to match up with Matthew 4:10 a parallel verse (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.212).

[955] Luke's version of the temptation is very close to [Matthew 4:1-11](#); see notes under Matthew for a detailed analysis of the passage. The only difference between Matthew and Luke's account is the order of events. Why Luke's order of the temptation is different from that of Matthew's is uncertain as they both used the same source. The modifications Luke makes to the text are minor and need not worry us.

[956] [Mark 1:14-15](#) was the source of Luke above, see notes under Mark for an explanation. Luke though, makes major modifications to the text: Jesus' proclamation about the kingdom of heaven is omitted; and now powered by the Holy **Spirit** (which descended on him while being baptised by John) Jesus goes out and begins to get noticed by the whole region.

[957] Luke is copying from the Gospel of Mark again, this time from [Mark 6:1-6](#). See notes under Mark for details of this section.

[958] **Textual Variant**

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds: *He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, after good news to the poor*. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[959] Luke quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. However, he omits some of Chapter 61, verse 2 which reads: "...to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, *and the day of vengeance of our God*; to comfort all who mourn..." The omission may be due to the suppression of the negative aspect of the quotation.

As was the custom of the Jews, they would enter the Synagogue on Saturdays to study the Law; the practice may have involved passing scrolls to certain people for them to read

and maybe even elaborate. Jesus found the above passage, which he felt was fulfilled in his person. The spirit had already descended upon him in the baptism and he had already begun proclaiming God's message to the people. He now turns to his own native land to inform them that he is the Messiah.

[960] Luke makes further additions to the Gospel of Mark above: The first the reading of the book of Isaiah by Jesus. The reaction of the crowd is also slightly different; rather than being *offended* by him as in Mark and Matthew, they **were amazed by the words of grace**. Instead of the negative questioning about him being the *son of a carpenter*, they address him as the **son of Joseph**, as if in admiration and surprise at what he says.

[961] Here Luke makes a bit of a blunder when copying from the Gospel of Mark: After receiving admirable comments from the crowd, Jesus then complains that **no prophet is approved in his native land**. The last phrase is from Mark 6:4, which contradicts the earlier statement about Jesus' positive reception from the crowd.

[962] After displaying a favourable attitude to Jesus, the crowds become *furios*. Perhaps it was due to Jesus comparing himself with two great prophets of old, who were rejected by most of their own people as well. They seize him and attempt to throw him off a **hill** or mountain, but like a ninja, he miraculously evades them and leaves the land.

[963] Luke continues his copying of Mark's Gospel, this time from Mark 1:21-22. Jesus along with his new followers then travel to **Capernaum** where he begins to preach his message.

[964] The **scribes** were teachers of the Law. Jesus taught in a different way and system; being a prophet and being taught and guided by God, Jesus' teaching would have stood out among other men. This is attested in the Holy Quran as well, where God states:

"And HE (God) will teach him (Jesus) the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel;" (3:49)

The scribes are often portrayed in a very negative way in the gospels, for further details see under Mark 1:27.

[965] Luke this time copies from Mark 1:23-28 and the account is almost identical, see notes in Mark's Gospel for a fuller description of what happened and about demon possession.

[966] The context and text of Luke is based on Mark 1: 29-31. Jesus enters the house of Peter to heal his mother-in-law. There is one significant modification Luke makes; he has Jesus **rebuke the fever**, while Mark simply has Jesus touch her and heal her. For Luke, the fever played a similar role as a demon. This is not the only time Luke's Jesus rebukes spirits; he does this often (4:35, 9:42, 39:41). Luke seems to emphasise Jesus' scolding of the spirits a great deal more than the other two gospels. A possible reason for Luke's interest in demons could be linked to his profession; as mentioned in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, he was a physician.

Another modification to the text is the removal of James and John from the picture; this makes sense as Luke has not introduced these two disciples yet. In Luke Jesus calls these two disciples later on in Chapter 5. But that is not all; there is in fact no particular explanation as to why Jesus enters the house of Simon Peter, since he has not yet called Simon Peter to be his disciple! He calls him later in Chapter 5 as well. More blunders are made by Luke as he copies the Gospel of Mark; he still speaks of **they** asking Jesus, concerning the mother-in-law in verse 38, which makes sense in Mark since Jesus goes to Simon's house with Simon himself, James and John. But in Luke, he only enters with Simon, thus it should have read *he* (as in Peter) asked Jesus concerning her, unless Luke is referring to the household of Simon, but these are never mentioned in the text.

[967] Luke continues to copy from Mark, this time Mark 1:32-34, see notes under Mark for details of the explanation of the above verses.

[968] Similar to Mark 1:35-38, Luke has Jesus seek out an **uninhabited place** for solitude. However, Luke doesn't mention the fact that Jesus woke up early to do so like Mark 1:35 does, showing how Jesus prayed the Tahajjud prayer, see notes in Mark.

Jesus' **reason** for coming is to preach the **Kingdom of God**, this is supported by the Holy Quran: "And (Jesus will be) a Messenger to the Children of Israel..." (Holy Quran 3:50). The primary mission of any prophet is to proclaim the message given to them by God, and this is exactly what Jesus is indicating here, that the primary reason for which he came was to preach to the people. If it was to atone for the sins of mankind as it is often written in traditional Christian commentaries, then the proclamation of the message should have been secondary if not completely redundant. Or if he did travel to different towns and cities to preach, the main focus of his preaching should have been the atonement and his future sacrifice. However, this is something very rarely spoken of by Jesus himself, or more accurately to say, never spoken by Jesus.

Finally, Luke makes one more significant change to Mark's Gospel; it is not the disciples of Jesus who go out to seek him, but the crowds, who then try to prevent him from leaving them. The change is understandable; as already explained in Luke 4:29 the disciples of Jesus have not yet been introduced in the Gospel of Luke, rather they will be in the next chapter of Luke. However, in Mark's Gospel Jesus has met them already. This explains why in Mark it is the disciples who go out to find Jesus, whilst in Luke it is the crowds.

[969] Luke's account of the call to the disciples occurs much later in his gospel than Mark's (1:16-20) Jesus travels around Galilee preaching first before making contact with the disciples. Mark's Gospel has it the other way round. **Gennesaret** is a small fertile district west of the lake, which some writers refer to as the Sea of Galilee.

[970] The context and background in the Lukan account is very different from that of Mark and Matthew for that matter. See Mark 1:16-20 and Matthew 4:18-22 for the alternative accounts. The above in Luke begins with Jesus already being known by the crowds who follow him around, resulting in him climbing into an empty boat to preach.
[971]

After Jesus finished his discourse with the crowds, he turned his attention to **Peter** who was the owner of the boat he was in. Seeing the failure of Simon and his companions in fishing, Jesus instructed them to go further into the deep and **let down their nets**. Having lived in Galilee all his life, he too may have known a little about fishing. However, the depiction of Jesus above is him having some supernatural knowledge of where the fish could be caught. Jesus' advice proves successful; so much fish is caught that another boat is required to haul them on board, and then they both begin to **sink**!

[972] The reaction of Peter is rather baffling; before this Peter had not known Jesus (according to Luke), and was just listening to him preaching in his boat. Perhaps returning the favour, Jesus gives him some advice of where Peter and his companions should fish. The advice proves successful and in turn, Peter all of a sudden asks Jesus to leave him, for he is a **sinful man**. He acts as though he has committed some sin against Jesus himself, as if asking Jesus for his forgiveness.

The above in turn has led many scholars to notice the similarity of this story to the one related in John 21:1-8 of the 'resurrected' Jesus. Some scholars state that both stories stem from the same tradition and are speaking of the same miracle. There are numerous similarities: the disciples fish all day and night and catch nothing; Jesus' instruction to cast the net; Jesus is addressed as *lord*; and other fishermen take part in the catch but say nothing. Peter's reaction here in Luke makes little sense as well, after such a miracle one would expect Peter to be in awe and surprise, or at least defend his ability as a fisherman rather than apologise and confess his sinfulness. His reaction however, seems to be in line with John's narrative where he disowned Jesus three times and fled the trial abandoning his master. He is ashamed and tells Jesus that he is a sinful man etc.

With that in mind, it is likely that the account of calling the disciples outlined in the first three gospels may well be incorrect or at least greatly exaggerated, as it is significantly different from the fourth gospel's calling (see [John 1:35-51](#)). Luke's version may be partly possible, since after witnessing the beauty and wisdom in Jesus' teachings, many listeners who were previously fishermen decided to leave their occupations and follow Jesus instead. Having said that, it is difficult to view Luke's account of Peter's reaction as historically accurate, it must either refer to a post-crucifixion event as already explained above, or it may be the invention of the author Luke himself, who may have wished to paint Peter (the head of the Petrine Churches) in a bad light. See Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for further details on the types of Churches after Jesus.

[973] After witnessing the miracle of catching the many fish, **Simon** and the **Zebedee** brothers leave their previous occupations as fishermen and decide to follow Jesus. Luke's version contains more information than that of Mark and Matthew, making far more sense than the previous two gospels. Historically, it is likely that the fishermen did witness Jesus' preaching and after being convinced of his righteousness decided to follow him like many young Jews did when meeting a pious teacher or Rabbi.

This in turn brings our attention to which version of the gospels is correct: Mark, Matthew or Luke above? In Mark and Matthew, immediately after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, he is travelling in Galilee and sees Peter, James and John. He calls them and they follow him and that is how he attains his first apostles. However, in Luke the setting is completely different, occurring later in Jesus' ministry; where it is only after listening to his teachings, and witnessing his supernatural knowledge do the three men follow Jesus. The two accounts cannot be reconciled, which in turn points to the authors of the gospels simply writing what they had heard from the traditions of Jesus. This is excluding the totally different version in the fourth gospel!

[974] Luke copies from [Mark 1:39-45](#); see comments under Mark for the interpretation of the above verses. However, Luke has some significant changes: The first is the context, in Mark's Gospel Jesus calls the disciples, then visits Peter's home, then leaves for Galilee and then heals the leper. In Luke, Jesus first visits Peter (why he does so is baffling since Peter is not yet his disciple according to Luke), then leaves Capernaum, calls his disciples and then heals the leper.

The other notable difference is that Luke omits the emotional response of Jesus; his *anger* at the request of the leper which is recorded in Mark 1:41. Luke most likely felt uncomfortable and thought to leave that part out.

[975] **Interpreters or Teachers of the Law** is used only once in the gospels, and once more in Acts of the Apostles, in reference to Gamaliel in Acts 5:34, who was a Pharisee himself. It may be a sub-group of the Pharisees; perhaps their leaders, predecessors of the Rabbis later in history, or they may simply be the scribes as mentioned in verse 21 above.

[976] The whole account is a copy of [Mark 2:1-12](#); for a detailed analysis of the passage, see under Mark. The main difference Luke has is that he speaks of tiles on the roof. The houses in Palestine were often made of wooden beams placed alongside mud bricks and stone, and the beams on the roof were often covered with straw, reed and clay. Thus the description of *digging or breaking up* in Mark is more accurate in such a setting. Luke, however replaces all this with tiles, which were more common in Hellenistic houses in the east, thus making the whole episode more easily understood for his Greek readers.

[977] Like the previous section, Luke continues to copy from the Gospel of [Mark 2:13-17](#), for a detailed explanation of the account, see under Mark. Luke expands on Mark's text though; he has Levi (not *Matthew* as the Gospel of Matthew indicates) hold a banquet before following Jesus. Thus the sinners and others who were at the table would have been friends and family of Levi himself, along with Jesus and his disciples.

[978] The above is from the Gospel of Mark 2:18-22, for a detailed interpretation of the passage, see under Mark. Luke makes few modifications to Mark's Gospel though; he adds a further accusation that Jesus' disciples do not fast not pray, while in Mark they simply not fast. However this isn't true, since Jesus himself prayed repeatedly and also taught them how to pray (Mark 1:35, 6:46, 11:25, 14:32; Matt 5:44, 9:38; Luke 5:16). Copying from Mark's text, perhaps Luke wished to make the point and exaggerate the accusation slightly.

[979] Textual Variant

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based adds *and both are preserved* to the end of this verse. However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[980] Textual Variant

Luke's last verse is something new which is absent from both Mark and Matthew: *The old is better*, which is recorded in both the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus while the Codex Bezae omits the phrase. The famous Textual Critic Bart Ehrman argues that Christian scribes would have been baffled at the saying: *The old is good/better*, since how can the old (Torah) be better than the new (Jesus' teachings)? As such, he would have likely omitted the phrase to avoid confusion (*Misquoting Jesus*, p.96).

Commentary

This saying is also mentioned in the Gospel of Thomas (47): 'Nobody drinks aged wine and immediately wants to drink young wine. Young wine is not poured into old wineskins, or they might break, and aged wine is not poured into a new wineskin, or it might spoil. An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, since it would create a tear.'

Just to note, the Gospel of Thomas was a recently discovered gospel near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. It was written in the Coptic language and comprises of 114 sayings (like hadith) of Jesus, many of which resemble the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic (first three) gospels. It is believed to have been written between 60 CE and 140 CE. It was initially attributed to a group of heretic Christians known as the Gnostics, but this attribution has been challenged by more recent scholars. I would argue that this gospel contains more of the original teachings of Jesus than the four canonical gospels (especially John).

The addition of Luke is rather baffling, since as already explained above, the old wine (i.e. the older interpretations of the Torah) are now to be preferred over the new wine (Jesus' own interpretations), which obviously cannot be the case. The tradition, which made its way into the Gospel of Thomas and Luke must have had another context rather than the above.

[981] The above passage was copied from Mark 2:23-28, again see notes under Mark for the interpretation.

[982] Textual Variant

In the Codex Bezae, there exists an additional passage after verse 5. "That same day, he saw someone working on the Sabbath, he said to him: 'O Man, if indeed you understand what you are doing, you are blessed; if indeed you do not understand you are accursed and a transgressor of the Law.' Again, this is a textual variant. Is it possible that this passage was in the original Luke?

It is likely the extra verse was added to the text to further the cause of the much later Church that the Sabbath was no longer required, enough for Jesus to even bless a man who knowingly breaks the commandment.

[983] The source of Luke's story above is Mark 3:1-6; see notes under Mark for an explanation of the passage. The only rather small change Luke makes to the text of Mark is the removal of Jesus' angry groan (Mark 3:5).

[984]

After healing the man, Jesus goes out and spends the entire night in prayer to God. The practice of praying the Tahajjud prayer is widespread amongst Muslims and was heavily encouraged by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Jesus, being a prophet of God also had this blessed habit.

[985] Luke's account is similar to Mark 3:13-19; readers should check notes under Mark for comments about each apostle. There is one difference between Mark and Luke's list of apostles; *Thaddeus* in Mark's list has now been replaced by **Judas (or Jude) the son of James**. Early Church writers attempted to argue that the two were the same people, yet there is no New Testament proof of this, and the most likely reason is that different lists existed for the twelve apostles.

[986] The above text is very similar to Mark 3:7-12. The text is quite self-explanatory. However, Luke does change some of Mark's text; Luke removes the talk of demons coming out of people and the Messianic Secret (see under Mark 3:12). Another notable difference is that Luke speaks of a great crowd of Jesus' **disciples** along with the other crowds. This is in contrast to the other gospels which mainly speak of just the twelve. Elsewhere, Luke mentions that Jesus sends seventy of his disciples out to preach (Luke 10:1).

[987] Luke's version of the Beatitudes is similar to Matthew 5:1-12. The first Beatitude is almost identical to Matthew's 5:3. Jesus is blessing or giving glad tidings to the **poor**, and to them he is promising the kingdom of heaven. Such a teaching is also present in the hadith (sayings) of the Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sa'id: A man passed by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked a man sitting beside him, "What is your opinion about this (passer-by)?" He replied, "This (passer-by) is from the noble class of people. By Allah, if he should ask for a lady's hand in marriage, he ought to be given her in marriage, and if he intercedes for somebody, his intercession will be accepted. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) kept quiet, and then another man passed by and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked the same man (his companion) again, "What is your opinion about this (second) one?" He said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! This person is one of the poor Muslims. If he should ask a lady's hand in marriage, no-one will accept him, and if he intercedes for somebody, no one will accept his intercession, and if he talks, no-one will listen to his talk." Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "This (poor man) is better than such a large number of the first type (i.e. rich men) as to fill the earth." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 76, Number 454, made available on www.sunnah.com).

There is another possible interpretation of the term *poor*; it may actually refer to the community and followers of Jesus. The Ebionites were early Jewish Christians who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, but did not believe him to be a divine being, but rather a mortal man. See under Mark 10:22 for a detailed discussion on the Ebionites.

Since both Matthew and Luke have similar accounts, they both copied from the same source, that being Q. See under Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more details.

[988] The above is about those who are **hungry now**, they will be satisfied, as will those who weep now. Its parallel is Matthew 5:6 above. It does not seem to refer to those who are **hungry** and **thirsty** for food, i.e. the poor, but rather to those who are hungry and thirsty to attain righteousness and closeness to God. These people will find that their struggles and strivings will soon come to an end where they will attain their goal and will be satisfied, if not in this world, in the next. It may also allude to fasting of some sort.

Just a small note; nowhere else in the gospels does the word *laugh* occur, except when certain people laugh at Jesus. In fact, Jesus never laughs in the gospels, which has led some scholars to say he never had a sense of humour. He no doubt did, but the gospel writers probably didn't come across any traditions showing it.

The Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have laughed on numerous occasions (Sahih Muslim, Book 001, Number 0359). At other times, he would tell jokes as well (Al-Hakam, *Eloquent humour: A less mentioned quality of the Holy Prophet*, <https://www.alhakam.org/eloquent-humour-a-less-mentioned-quality-of-the-holy-prophet/>). “His companions relate that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) used to sit in their gatherings and it never happened that they were sitting and enjoying themselves and he would talk about some sad or dull matter. He would sit with them, laugh and tell jokes and listen to their humorous stories” (Ibid).

[989] Verses 22 and 23 are similar to Matthew's 5:10-12. It differs from the others, and may point to the fact that it was narrated by Jesus *after* his crucifixion, as persecution of his followers did not begin until *after* he was proclaimed a criminal by the Jews and Romans. There is absolutely no hint of any persecution of Jesus and his followers thus far in Luke's Gospel, nor in fact any persecution of the disciples before Jesus is arrested, but only occurs afterwards in the beginning of Acts of the Apostles where there is plenty. Thus all the evidence points to the above Beatitude being a post crucifixion saying.

[990] The setting in Luke is similar to that of Matthew; the above is spoken by Jesus after teaching The Beatitudes in Chapter 48. Both Luke and Matthew have taken from the Q source, and although Luke omits much of the source the general message is the same.

[991] Verses 29 and 30 are very similar to Matthew 5:38-42, although Matthew provides more context by having Jesus quote from the Old Testament first and then give his own interpretation. Luke, being a Gentile himself probably edited the Old Testament part out, thinking it irrelevant for his Gentile audience.

[992] Verses 32-36 of Luke are quite similar to Matthew 5:43-48. However, like the previous point, in Matthew Jesus quotes the Old Testament first and then provides his interpretation, which again Luke omits in his version. However, the overall message is the same: To love one's enemies as well.

Luke though, does have a small but significant difference: Those whom the disciples are not to imitate in Matthew, i.e. the tax-collectors and *Gentiles*, are now replaced by **sinners** in Luke. Which version is therefore correct? It is very unlikely that Jesus spoke both Matthew's and Luke's versions, since the sayings are almost identical in some sections.

The answer lies in the opinions and views of the authors. The source of the above narrative is Q, which both Matthew and Luke had access to, and as already mentioned under the comments of Matthew's version above, the author was a Jewish Christian who was against the Gentiles, and saw them as sinners, therefore he had no problems in likening Gentiles to sinners who were not to be imitated. Luke, on the other hand, was a Gentile himself and wrote his gospel for Gentiles. Therefore Luke most likely modified his source to replace the Gentiles with sinners, as it would make little sense for him to insult his audience!

[993] Verses 37 and 38 are very similar to Mark 4:23-24 and Matthew 7:1-2. The saying is primarily to do with judgement; the **measure** one gives will be the measure they get; in other words, whatever good deeds one does, they will be rewarded accordingly.

[994] It is uncertain why Luke has placed the passage about the blind men in the above, since it seems very out of place. This in turn is discussed under its parallel passage in Matthew 15:14.

[995] Finally we have the passage about the **speck and beam**, which isn't in Mark's gospel but is in Matthew 7:4-5. Meaning both Matthew and Luke copied from the Q source (see Introduction to Gospels for more information about Q).

Jesus addresses the hypocrites, who are very quick to judge others yet find no fault with themselves. But quite the opposite is the case. The parable is also present in the Talmud: “‘Take the chip out of your eye!’ and the other states; ‘Take the log out of yours!’” (bArakh 16b; 6BB 15b). The metaphor is strong; whilst it is possible to have a speck in one’s eye it is impossible and unimaginable to have an entire log in an eye. Someone with a log in their eye is completely blind, and thus cannot judge the person with the speck in their brother’s eye at all.

[996] The above saying is from the Q source, since both Matthew and Luke record it. See notes under [Matthew 7:15-20](#) for details.

[997] Like Matthew ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)), Luke too ends his long discourse with the above. The text is very similar to Matthew; both Luke and Matthew using the same source; Q.

[998] **Important Words**

δουλος (*doulos*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *slave; servant* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). I have preferred **slave** over *servant* which the WEB translates to, since in antiquity, servants did not really exist, most servants or workers of the rich were slaves.

What the ill person’s relationship is with the centurion is difficult to figure out, since the above story is repeated in [Matthew 8:5-18](#) and [John 4:46-54](#). Matthew and particularly John indicate that the person was the *child* of the centurion, but Luke seems to have understood it rather as a slave.

[999] As already noted above, Matthew records this story as well in his gospel. There are differences, and the above verse shows the second difference between Luke’s version and Matthew’s; whilst the latter has the centurion himself approach Jesus, in Luke the centurion sends others to ask Jesus instead. Matthew’s version is probably correct, since it is supported by John and seems more appropriate for the humble centurion.

[1000] Since Jesus was not in the habit of teaching or even healing Gentiles, the Jews had to convince him that the centurion was an exception and was worthy of being considered. This was probably not the intention of Luke who wrote the above, or may well have copied it directly from his source. Luke (being a Gentile himself) would have wished to show his readers that Gentiles are good and worthy of entering the Church.

[1001] The centurion in Luke’s account seems to have very good relations with the Jews, and interestingly, Luke omits the final phrase in Matthew about the coming from the east and the west; instead he mentions this prophecy in 13:29, which is more in line (scholars argue) with the Q text. Very much like the Matthean account, the story is about the remarkable faith of one Gentile, who had faith that Jesus could heal his child. This account cannot be used as evidence that Jesus would have welcomed a Gentile to become his disciple, as there is no mention of this in the text; see notes under [Matthew 5:13](#) for more details.

[1002] **Important Words**

ἐγέρθητι (*egeythai*) – Verb, aorist passive imperative, 2nd person singular of ἐγείρω (*egeirow*) meaning: *transitively and literally of a sleeping person; active; wake; rouse; wake up; arouse*. Transitivity and literally of a person lying down: *raise up; help to raise; lift up*. Also healing a person: *restore to health* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1003] **Important Words**

ἐπεσκέψατο (*epeskepsato*) – Verb, aorist indicative, 3rd person singular of ἐπισκευτομαι (*episkemtymai*) meaning: *go to help; look after; visit; come to help; be concerned about*

(Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[1004] Among the many miracles and signs of Jesus, this is one of the greatest; the raising of the dead. The miracle is described in the Holy Quran where Jesus says:

“...And I will bring to life the dead by the command of Allah” (3:50).

All prophets have performed miracles, and numerous are described in the Holy Quran and Bible, but not all are to be taken literally. Those which seemingly contradict the laws of God cannot be taken literally and must be allegorical. For elsewhere in the Quran; the Law regarding the returning of dead ones is laid out clearly:

“Until when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord, send me back, so that I may do good in that which I left behind.’ Never! Verily it is a word which he speaks, and behind them is a barrier until the Day they will be resurrected” (23:100-101).

Therefore since the literal interpretation cannot be applied, allegorically the action of *raising the dead* would most likely mean that Jesus was raising back to life those who were spiritually dead, since the Arabic word for dead موت (moat) has the following meanings: *he died having passed away; the land became destitute of cultivation and of inhabitants; he became deprived of sensation, dead as to the senses; he became deprived of the intellectual faculty (intellectually dead or ignorant)* (Lane). The term has been used allegorically elsewhere in the Holy Quran;

“Verily you cannot make the dead to hear nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they flee turning their backs” (27:81).

All prophets bring people back from the dead, i.e. the spiritually dead. The Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is no different; in fact God commands the people to go to him and receive life:

“O you who believe, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you, that he may give you life, and know that Allah comes between a man and his heart, and that to Him you will be gathered” (8:24).

With that in mind, what of the above Lukan account? The allegorical interpretation cannot be applied in this situation, unless Luke’s source spoke of Jesus raising people from the dead, which Luke interpreted literally and he then created a story to encapsulate the miracle. The letter of Timothy, even though it has been suspected not to have been written by Paul, but much later, possibly around 90CE, speaks of spiritually dead people: “She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives” (1 Timothy 5:5-6).

Even Christian sources later mention spiritually dead people; there is an interesting account recorded by Eusebius, where John (the supposed author of the fourth gospel) met a youngster and gave him to a bishop in Smyrna to care for. Returning to the city, he enquired after the youngster and was told: ‘He is dead.’ ‘How?’ ‘He is dead to God,’ as he had become a bandit and a thief (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, published by Penguin Classics in 1965, Book 3, 23:29).

The other possible method of interpreting the above Lukan account would be in a scientific manner; his account may not have spoken of resurrection, but in fact resuscitation. Perhaps the eye witness mistook the man to be dead, whilst in fact he was alive. To be clinically dead the brain must be dead. Testing this in the first century was impossible; in fact an almost identical account of resuscitation is recorded by Philostratus about Apollonius of Tyana:

“While all of Rome mourned the death of a newly-wed girl, as she was being carried in the bier, Apollonius came along and ordered it to be put down. ‘Touching her and saying something over her indistinctly, he woke up the maiden from her seeming death; the girl uttered a sound and returned to her father’s house.’ Philostratus does, however, explain later that it is uncertain and impossible to tell now whether the girl was really dead, or that Apollonius may have seen a spark of life in the girl and the warmth of his touch restored her back to consciousness” (Frederick C. Conybeare, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Vol 1, (1912), p.456-59).

Even cases of mistaken death occur in modern times: The Boston Globe reported on January 25, 2001 that a woman was found in her bathtub with a suicide note and evidence that she had taken a drug overdose was close by. No pulse was found, no sign of breathing and her eyes were unresponsive. She was then taken to a funeral home only to be found alive later and taken to hospital.

This may well have happened back in the days of Jesus, as the absence of movement and breathing may have been an indication that the person was dead. The miracle was that just at the time when they were close to gaining consciousness, Jesus approached and simply woke them up. This is not the first time in Jewish history where a prophet had supposedly raised someone from the *dead*; the miracle had been performed by the Old Testament Prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17:22. The story resembles the above Lukan account, where Elijah visits a town and a widow, her son dies, but is later resurrected by Elijah.

[1005] John the Baptist was arrested by Herod Antipas (Mark 6:17) very early in Jesus’ mission. Whilst remaining in prison, his disciples may have informed him about the actions and works of Jesus, which would have resulted in him sending his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether he was the Messiah and if so, declare it openly.

However, there are a few problems that may need addressing before Jesus gives his reply. The above account contradicts the Gospel of John, where the Baptist proclaims openly and points out Jesus declaring him to be the *lamb of God* (John 1:29-36). Had John the Baptist declared this before his arrest, it would make little sense for him to dispatch disciples to Jesus to confirm his position. John the Baptist recognises Jesus as the Messiah early in Matthew’s account (3:14), thus making it all the more confusing why he would ask for confirmation later.

If John the Baptist did send out his disciples to confirm the identity of Jesus, the accounts of the Gospel of John about Jesus being the *lamb of God* and the statement of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:14 are to be considered as inventions of the authors of the gospels. There is no alternative interpretation for accepting all three accounts.

[1006] The above account is from the source known as Q, since it is recorded by both the gospel writers Matthew (11:1-6) and Luke. Jesus’ reply does not answer the question directly, instead he goes on to explain the present era and how it fulfils prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Numerous works written around the time of Jesus held the view that after the coming of the Messiah, a universal peace would descend on the land, in that pain and suffering would cease, even the pain of child birth would cease and farmers would no longer tire from their work (2 [Syriac Apocalypse of] Baruch Chapter 74); in essence undoing the punishment God places on Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:16-17. Jesus is describing the build-up to such a scene, but like all prophecies, these are not to be taken literally, since Jesus did not bring about such changes, nor are such changes described in his second coming.

[1007]

For details on John the Baptist and Elijah see Mark 9:11-13. See under Mark 1:3 for the interpretation of the Old Testament quotation.

[1008] Luke’s source is Q, much like Matthew. For a detailed commentary of the passage, see under Matthew 11:7-19.

[1009] The above story is one of the rare accounts which occurs in all four gospels. For Luke, his source was the gospel of Mark 14:3-9, but Luke makes numerous changes to the

Markan text. The first is that the event occurs much earlier in Jesus' career, against Mark who records towards the end. The host in Luke is **Simon**, a Pharisee, while in Mark it was *Simon the Leper*. It might be possible that Simon was both a Pharisee and a Leper, however, it is more likely that our author Luke thought to change the Markan account as will be seen more below.

[1010] Like the Gospel of Mark, the woman above seems to have been an uninvited guest, but things go very differently in Luke's Gospel from here: In Mark and Matthew, the woman enters the house and breaks the box of oil over Jesus' head, but in Luke she comes in and stands behind Jesus, by his **feet**, **weeping** and wetting his feet with her **tears**; she then removes her head-dress and loosens her hair to dry his feet and it would have been this action which would have caused the Pharisee's comment. She oils Jesus' feet as well with expensive ointment, but such an action draws no criticism from Jesus' disciples as Mark and Matthew indicate.

[1011] The woman is referred to as a **sinner** in this account; Mark and Matthew mention nothing of the sort, whilst John goes as far as naming her. It is not stated what sins the woman committed, but it is likely that she was guilty of some sort of unchastely behaviour, as this is likely to have gone through the Pharisee's mind.

[1012] Jesus notices the uncomfortable reaction of the host and asks him a question in the form of a parable. The parable spoken by Jesus emphasises the concept of love and links it with the forgiveness of sins. Since the woman shows more love to Jesus than Simon does, she is more entitled to be forgiven her sins, and in much the same way, people who express such love and genuine repentance to God would likewise receive forgiveness from God. Jesus then gives her the good news that her sins are forgiven. For details on Jesus forgiving the sins of people, see under Mark 2:5.

As mentioned a little earlier, the above account has been recorded in all four gospels, Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13 and John 12:1-8 as well. See John's version for a complete overall picture and how the whole event was most likely made up by the early Church.

[1013] **Mary** was a native of the town of Magdala by the Sea of Galilee and a very close companion of Jesus. The above describes her as one of the women who looked after Jesus and his disciples, which implies that she was a relatively wealthy woman, who devoted her life and person to Jesus, particularly after Jesus healed her of her evil spirits as the above states. She plays a major role in the resurrection narratives: visiting the tomb in the Synoptic (first three) gospels and being the first to witness Jesus' resurrection in John's Gospel.

There is much speculation, too, regarding the relationship Jesus had with Mary; numerous texts mention that he loved her very much; the Gospel of Mary records how Peter is rebuked by Levi regarding Mary, saying 'Surely the Saviour knows her well. This is why he loved her more than us.' The Gospel of Philip refers to Mary as Jesus' lover (Ch. 32) and consort (Ch. 55) whom Jesus would often kiss and loved very much. Mary may well have been the wife of Jesus, but this is all uncertain and mere speculation.

[1014] Certain other women seem to have become followers of Jesus; from the above they seemed wealthy and provided for the needs of Jesus and his disciples on their missionary journeys.

[1015] Like Matthew, Luke also copied Mark 4:1-9 almost word for word, see notes under Mark for an explanation.

[1016] Luke, too, continues copying from the Gospel of Mark, this time Mark 4:10-12.

[1017] Luke's version of the passage is very similar to Mark 4:13-20, with subtle but not significant modifications.

[1018] Luke is copying Mark 3:31-35 this time, and repeats Jesus' harsh tone against his own family. This is particularly odd within this gospel, since the beginning of the Gospel of Luke talks very highly of Jesus' mother, not only that, but the importance and piety of James, the brother of Jesus, is well known in Church history (for a fuller description of James, see under Mark 6:3). Luke seems to have copied his source (Gospel of Mark) without much thought, not realising the contradictions he creates within his own gospel.

[1019] Mark 4:35-41 is the source of the above account, see notes under Mark for a detailed explanation.

[1020] Luke's account is slightly different from Matthew 8:28-34, but almost identical to Mark 5:1-20, showing that he, too, was using the latter's gospel as his source.

[1021] Textual Variants

The above is the original reading according to the earliest manuscripts such as P⁷⁵ and Codex Vaticanus. The expanded version as recorded by the KJV is *who had spent all her living on physicians and could not be healed by any* which was made by a Christian Scribe who borrowed it from Mark 5:26 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.218).

[1022] Again, Luke's account is almost identical to Mark 5:21-43.

[1023] Luke's account is similar to Mark 6:7-11 rather than Matthew's (10:1-16) version. You will notice that Mark and Luke's version of the above does not contain the restriction of the mission to only the Jews as Matthew does. This is due to both Mark and Luke being Gentiles themselves. They would have disagreed with Matthew.

[1024]

Luke is copying the text of Mark 6:12-16 this time. Jesus' fame spreads to such a degree that Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, hears reports of him and is given a number of options about who he is; the first being that it was John the Baptist raised from the dead, others proclaimed him to be Elijah yet others simply pointed to him being a prophet like those of old.

The opinion of Jesus being **John** the Baptist raised from the dead is not like the raising of the dead, like that of Lazarus in John's Gospel (chapter 11), but rather the idea that when an extremely pious or evil man died, he often came back to the world through another person and was given extraordinary powers. John the Baptist performed no miracles according to the gospels, but the opinion of numerous people, including Antipas, was that he returned as Jesus who did perform miracles.

[1025] Luke's account is closer to Mark 6:32-44 than Matthew 14:13-21; he retains much of the Markan text which Matthew omits.

[1026] Mark 8:27-30 and Matthew 16:13-20 both record the above discussion as well. However, the setting in Luke is completely different; the latter two gospels have Jesus ask the disciples about his identity whilst walking to Caesarea Philippi, whereas in Luke he asks them directly after feeding the five thousand. This time, there is no way of harmonising the two occasions, since Jesus would not have asked the same question and received the exact same answer twice. The question was asked by Jesus just once, but in different settings according to the different authors.

- [1027] Like Mark, Luke's version also omits the declaration and naming of Simon to Peter as Matthew does. Luke is closer to the text of Mark, showing that he used Mark as his source. See under Mark for details.
- [1028] This is the first time in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus 'prophesies' his death. Luke is copying Mark 8:31-33. For a detailed analysis of this bogus prophecy, see under Mark. Besides that, Luke does make some changes to Mark's text, he seems to omit the reference of Jesus rebuking Peter and calling him Satan. The incident is the same, since in both Mark and Luke the above happens directly after Jesus' identity was confirmed as the Christ. Whilst copying the text of Mark, perhaps Luke felt it was a bit harsh that Jesus referred to Peter as Satan.
- [1029] Luke's account is almost identical to that of Mark 8:34-38 but with subtle changes; the main one being that Luke allegorises the taking up of one's cross in Mark to one's cross *daily*. For a detailed explanation of the passage, see notes under Mark.
- [1030] Luke, too, continues from the previous chapter, and like Matthew 17:1-9, he is also using the text of Mark 9:2-10 as his source. However, in the very first line Luke makes a change; the *six days* of Mark are now changed to **eight days**. It may simply be a rounding up for *about a week later*. The three disciples are also taken up the mountain to pray, thus excluding the notion that he took them solely to manifest himself as Mark and Matthew depict.
- [1031] Both **Moses** and **Elijah** also appear in Luke: however, the topic of their discussion is announced; they are speaking of Jesus' death in **Jerusalem**. This addition no doubt reflects the prophecies of Jesus about his death, mentioned in verse 22 above. The addition can only be the words of the author himself as they are omitted in other gospels and follow on from the invented prophecies placed in Jesus' mouth.
- [1032] This verse is also an addition to the Markan text; the disciples were sleeping, probably due to the late hour and duration of Jesus' prayers. It was only when they woke up that they, too, witnessed the vision.
- [1033] The remaining verses are more or less the same as Mark's, with the omission of the lack of understanding of the disciples, which Matthew also omits.
- [1034] Following the transfiguration, both Mark and Matthew record a discussion between Jesus and his disciples about the coming of Elijah (Mark 9:11-13 and Matthew 17:10-13). Luke skips the Elijah questions and moves immediately to the healing of the possessed boy. Writing to a strong Gentile audience, Luke may have felt it inappropriate to speak of a Jewish prophet coming as a forerunner to Jesus. He chose to omit it completely.
- [1035] The above account is from Mark 9:11-29; it is short like Matthew but retains much of Mark which Matthew omitted. The boy's father describes the symptoms of the boy as being possessed by a **demon**, as opposed to Matthew's epilepsy. While the boy is brought to Jesus, the demon convulses him and tears at him, but is rebuked by Jesus and cast out. The crowd witness the event and are amazed. However, according to Luke the account ends there; nothing is said about why the disciples were unable to cast out the demon themselves; nor the attribution of prayer and fasting as in Mark; nor the lack of faith as in Matthew.
- [1036] Luke follows Mark more closely than Matthew; he, too, has the disciples not understand the easy saying, but does not blame their lack of intelligence, rather the saying of Jesus was **concealed from them**, thus defeating the whole purpose of Jesus' saying: the words clearly didn't **sink** in their ears.

[1037] Luke's account is similar to Mark 9:33-37, the latter being his source. Jesus' answer is the same, but the order is switched; one is to receive a child and then be last, as opposed to Mark's being last and then receiving a child. See under Mark for more details.

[1038] The context is the same in Luke, but it is rather surprising that Luke retains the above from Mark 9:38-40. The reason this is surprising is because Luke creates a contradiction later when writing Acts of the Apostles, see under Mark for details.

[1039] Textual Variant

The original wording of the Gospel of Luke is as above according to the earliest manuscripts. However, this is expanded to *rebuked them, and said "You do not know what spirit you belong to. For the son of man has not come to destroy human lives but to save them* in one later manuscript called Codex Bezae. Dissatisfied with this gap in the narrative, Christian scribes added the longer text (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.220).

[1040] This is the only time in the Synoptic gospels (first three gospels) where Jesus has interaction with the **Samaritans**. The response of the Samaritans is not very good and they seemingly reject Jesus since he seems to be too 'Jewish' and has his **face** set towards **Jerusalem**. However, according to Matthew, the disciples should not have even gone to the Samaritans, since Jesus forbids them (Matt 10:5); whilst in John he visits them and is accepted (John 4:39-42).

To reconcile the above in the few years of Jesus' ministry before his crucifixion is very difficult. For one gospel has him forbidding his disciples to go anywhere near them (Matthew); in another he visits but is rejected by them (Luke); and in another he visits and is accepted (John). Which is historically correct? It may be possible to place the Matthean prohibition of going to them after the harsh treatment Jesus received from them in Luke, but this leaves the Johannine account which is impossible to reconcile with either Matthew or Luke.

The only interpretation which can encompass all three accounts would begin with Luke's account, in that he tried to preach to the Samaritans but was rejected by them. In turn, he would have forbidden his disciples to go anywhere near them, as Matthew states. Both these events would have happened *before* the crucifixion. John's account would have happened *after* the crucifixion, since it was only after Jesus was rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem that he no longer **had his face set to Jerusalem** as verse 53 above indicates. Once the Jerusalem Jews rejected Jesus, he would have turned to the Jews outside Jerusalem and he would have included the Samaritans as another group that he would approach, with a view to preaching to them. They would have seen this and given him a chance to preach and accept his message.

[1041] The above account comes from Q, as both Matthew (8:18-22) and Luke record it. See under Matthew for details of the passage. However, Luke adds another example of the urgency of Jesus' message; he did not even permit a potential follower to bid farewell to his family, which can be a rather cruel act, since the disappearance of the man would have caused almost unbearable pain to his family. Thus the above additions may in fact be the inventions of the author himself.

[1042] After being rejected by the Samaritans in the previous chapter, Jesus appoints and sends out seventy of his disciples.

[1043] The appointment of seventy other disciples is only mentioned in the Gospel of Luke; both Mark and Matthew make no reference to any other disciples of Jesus besides the twelve; whilst John does include a few more, e.g. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Who these **seventy** above are is not known, but it is far more historically correct that Jesus would have more than a handful of disciples, and he probably did have far more than seventy. Even Paul is aware of more than twelve or seventy disciples, when he speaks of Jesus appearing to more than five hundred after his 'resurrection' (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Having said all that, the above appointment of the seventy is unlikely to be accurate, since verses 4 and 5 are actually a doublet of the first six verses of the previous chapter of Luke; Chapter 9, where the twelve disciples are sent out and given similar instructions. In fact the above passage is most likely to be from the same source, Q, where Matthew also took his sayings on the Commissioning of the Twelve; see [Matthew 10:1-16](#). Luke seems to record two instances where Jesus commissions his disciples to go out and preach: the first in Chapter 9, where he dispatches the twelve main disciples; and the second one above where seventy are dispatched.

[1044] See under [Matthew 10:1-16](#) for the interpretation of the above verses, particularly Matthew's version which is very similar.

[1045] Luke's account is almost identical to that of [Matthew 11:20-24](#), both using the same Q source. See notes under Matthew for the interpretation of the verses.

[1046] The disciples return from their mission spoken of in the previous chapter, with success, informing Jesus that many believe in him now. They are especially pleased that **demons** were subject to them. Even though, Jesus did not order them to go out and exorcise demons, but to preach that the Kingdom of God is near.

[1047] Jesus, too, responds well to their report; it is unlikely that he actually saw **Satan falling like lightning from heaven**, since the latter would not have been in heaven anyway, but rather the saying is a phrase used to sum up the success of the disciples; that the evil power of Satan was dented and his power was challenged to such a degree that he fell from the heavens. Verse 19 points out that, since Satan has fallen from his high place, his power here on earth is also affected; and that **snakes and scorpions**, symbols of the devil, (recall that Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent in Genesis 3:1) will now be trampled over by the disciples. Jesus is proclaiming that his disciples now have the power to destroy evil and nothing can come in their way. However, they should not rejoice at such a feat, rather they should rejoice over the fact that their names have been written in heaven, i.e. they have now been promised heaven.

[1048] Both [Matthew \(11:25-27\)](#) and Luke have taken their sources from Q. There are subtle changes made to the texts, but the overall message is the same. See notes under Matthew for an explanation of the above passage.

[1049] The above is a copy of [Mark 12:28-34](#), but with significant changes. In Mark, it is a scribe who comes to Jesus and asks him *Which commandment is first of all*, to which Jesus then proceeds to give them the same answer as the above. Matthew (22:34-40) is similar to Luke in that it isn't a scribe, but rather a **Lawyer** who asks Jesus. But, again the question is different! In Matthew the Lawyer asks *Which commandment is the greatest in the Law*, as opposed to Luke's **What shall I do to inherit eternal life?** Which is actually closer to the question of The Rich Young Man in [Mark 10:17-22](#), [Matthew 19:16-22](#) and [Luke 18:18-23](#).

It is very difficult to see what exactly happened in the above event, since it is recorded by all three gospels but very differently in each. However, the accounts are too similar to be three different events, which points to modifications and alterations having been made by the authors themselves. Mark's version seems closest to what really happened, followed by Matthew and then Luke.

[1050] Very much like our notes under [Mark 10:17-22](#), had Jesus been the literal son of God, and had the only way to salvation been through his atoning of sins by dying, this would have been the perfect opportunity for him to explain to the lawyer that he must believe in the atonement to inherit eternal salvation. Yet, he asks the lawyer what he thinks is **written in the Law**; the latter gives the same reply Jesus does in the other gospels, to which Jesus acknowledges and tells him that if he follows it, he will live.

[1051] The above parable is only present in Luke's Gospel. It follows on from *The Great Commandment*, where Jesus is asked by a lawyer how he is to inherit eternal life. The

answer provided by Jesus is to follow the Law; in particular, to love God and to love your neighbour as yourself. It is the latter part of the answer that causes the man to enquire further about the identity of his neighbour. Jesus' response is the parable of the Good Samaritan.

[1052] The parable is heavily critical of the Jewish **priesthood** and **Levites**, both of whom mistake the man to be dead and avoid contact with him at all costs, most likely not wanting to become defiled. However, it was the **Samaritan** who had **compassion** and went to see how the man was, and finding him alive, bound his wounds and took him to an **inn**. There he even spends money to have him cared for. He proves to be the neighbour of the man, the true neighbour. The moral of the story being that your neighbour is anyone in need whom you come upon, but not just that, a true neighbour is one who shows pity and love to others.

It is interesting that the parable above occurs very shortly after Jesus himself is rejected by the Samaritans (Luke 9: 51-56). Why would Jesus give a parable speaking well of people who have just a day or two earlier rejected him and driven him out? Again, the answer lies in the timing of the parable and when it was spoken.

The parable is not just a lesson to teach the man about true neighbourliness, if that was the case, then mentioning priests, Levites and Samaritans wouldn't have been required. Three random people could have been mentioned instead.

In fact, there is a true historical account behind it; the man in the account is Jesus. He was travelling, was attacked, beaten and left for dead. The Jewish priests did not come to his aid; it was they who beat him! The Levites, too, ignored Jesus and left him for dead. However, it was the Samaritans who accepted him; see [John 4:4-42](#), but as already mentioned in that chapter, Jesus was only accepted by the Samaritans *after* the crucifixion, not before. The above parable is thus about the life of Jesus and shows that out of the three groups of people, it was the Samaritans who took care of the man/Jesus. In reality, the Samaritans took Jesus in after his cross ordeal and would have provided some sort of protection for Jesus against the Jews.

[1053] After the account of the Good Samaritan, Jesus goes into a certain village and is greeted by **Martha**, a female follower who cordially invites him to her house. She busies herself preparing and serving food to Jesus and his twelve disciples, and **Mary** her sister as well. This would be the same Mary Magdalene mentioned in numerous other instances in the four gospels (see notes under [Mark 15:40](#) for details about her). Martha complains about Mary for the latter, being a woman, should assist Martha in serving the male guests. Jesus replies telling her not to worry, since only one dish is required.

In essence, the reply of Jesus points to the importance of listening to his teachings. Whilst Martha busied herself making Jesus an elaborate meal, Mary sat by his feet listening to his teachings. The latter is far more important to Jesus and his disciples should not concern themselves over other issues, such as serving excessive food.

[1054] The Lord's Prayer is recorded in the Gospel of [Matthew 6:7-15](#) as well. However, the context and setting is different; in Luke he does so after visiting Mary and Martha, while in Matthew is much earlier in his ministry. Therefore, we are to expect that Jesus taught his disciples how to pray twice. Which could have happened, however, why would one of the disciples ask Jesus how to pray in Luke when Jesus had already taught them earlier in Matthew? Further, the reader will notice that Jesus teaches them how to pray in a different manner in Luke than in Matthew.

[1055] Textual Variant

The Lord's Prayer above is actually from the RSV translation, which differs from the version recorded in the WEB and KJV. The latter based on the Received Text tradition which actually reads:

'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

I have preferred the RSV which is based on much more accurate and earlier manuscripts.

Commentary

The answer to the questions in the previous note is that Luke simply had access to the same document Matthew used for his source; most likely Q. He then places the prayer much later in his gospel than Matthew had done, furthermore, he shortens it as well, and makes a few changes; one of which seems to be a slight blunder, where he speaks of **forgiving us our sins** as we **forgive those in debt to us**, which does not make much sense compared to Matthew's version.

[1056] The message here is persistence: that a man of God should show persistence in asking for God's mercy and favours, much in the same way as a man will show persistence and even make himself a nuisance to his friends for the sake of a guest. A similar parallel is discussed in the Talmud:

"It happened that they said to Honi the circle drawer: Pray for rain to fall." He replied: "Go and bring in the pesah ovens so that they do not dissolve." He prayed and no rain fell. What did he do? He drew a circle and stood within it and exclaimed before Him: "Master of the universe, Your children have turned their faces to me because I am like one who was born in Your house. I swear by Your great name that I will not move from here until You have mercy upon Your children." Rain then began to drip, and he exclaimed: "I did not request this but rain [which can fill] cisterns, ditches and caves. The rain then began to come down with great force, and he exclaimed: "I did not request this but pleasing rain of blessing and abundance." Rain then fell in the normal way until the Jews in Jerusalem had to go up Temple Mount because of the rain" (mTaan 3:8, made available by www.sefaria.org/texts).

The leading Pharisee of Honi's time even said regarding him: "what can I do to you, for you are spoiled before God and he does your will like a son that is spoiled before his father and his father does his request" (Ibid).

Jesus is teaching the same; a man comes knocking on his friend's door asking for extra bread, the latter does not wish to get up since he is all set and ready to go to sleep, but will have to give his friend some bread since he realises that he and his family will get no sleep with his consistent banging on the door, so he gets up and gives him whatever he wants. Albeit the sleeping friend is shown in a bad light and only does the request for selfish reasons; to get some sleep. The lesson of the parable is still persistence, that one should be persistent with God in requesting something and He will eventually answer.

[1057] Textual Variant

The above verse is based on the latest Greek editions of the Bible; the Nestle-Aland. It differs slightly from the WEB and KJV versions, since these translations are based on the Received Text tradition which actually reads:

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?"

I have preferred the better Greek editions, and the translation above actually matches up with the RSV translation

[1058] Both **Matthew (7:6-11)** and Luke have taken from the same source; Q. However, there are some differences in the saying. Matthew's son asking for *bread* and being given a *stone* has been changed to the son asking for an *egg* and being given a *scorpion*. That which is given by God is also different; in Matthew *God* gives good things while in Luke it is the **Holy Spirit** which is given.

The other rather significant change is that Luke omits verse 7:6 of Matthew, which is a direct attack on Gentiles, referring to them as *dogs*. Being a Gentile himself, our author Luke might have felt it inappropriate and preferred not to include the assault in his gospel.

[1059] The first mention of **Beelzebul** is made in 2 Kings 1:2, as the god of Ekron; one of the five chief cities of the Philistines. Beelzebul (meaning *lord of the flies*) is a deliberate biblical corruption of the original name of the pagan god *Baal Zabul* (Baal the Prince). The Pharisees are accusing Jesus of being possessed by Baal. The charge and accusation is serious, since according to the Torah, mediums and wizards are to be put to death: "A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 20:27). Although the above charge is not raised against Jesus in any of his trials, yet it is still serious enough for Jesus to refute it harshly in the next few verses.

[1060] This verse is very out of place in the above passage: after witnessing a miracle, some people are said to ask Jesus (testing him in fact) to bring a sign from heaven!

[1061] The above story is most likely from the Q source (see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this work), since both Luke and Matthew (12:22-30) record the account. However, the parable about the **strong man** most likely came from Mark 3:22-27, see under Mark for details.

[1062] Luke's account is almost identical to that of Matthew 12:43-45, illustrating that it originated from Q. However, Luke omits the reference to this evil generation, which is likely to be Matthew's own words, since he often attacks the Jewish people harshly in his gospel.

Like the Gospel of Matthew as well, the story seems quite out of place and has little or no relevance to Jesus' sayings before and after. It was either an exorcism story or a parable, the latter being more likely since it contains no instruction on exorcising. If it was a parable, the meaning is not certain, but likely refers to the Jewish people, that if they do not accept Jesus and do not repent, then their situation in the future will be much worse than before.

[1063] Moved by Jesus' preaching and parables, a woman from amongst the crowd cries out and calls his mother blessed. Surely a mother who gives birth and suckles a child who grows up to be such an eloquent speaker and guide must be blessed! But Jesus in turn brushes off such compliments and explains what true blessedness is; those who listen to his words, retaining them and abiding by them.

[1064] The Sign of Jonah is spoken of in Mark 8:11-13 and Matthew 12:38-42. Luke's version is quite different to the others. There is no time element (three days and three nights) but simply the fact that Jonah was a sign for his people, likewise will the son of man (Jesus) be a sign for this generation. The only sign and miracle which Jonah performed in his book is the deliverance from the sea and whale; besides that there is no mention of any other sign or any other extraordinary activity performed by the prophet. Therefore, this sign must also be applied to Jesus and as explained above in the comments under Matthew, this is exactly the sign and miracle performed by Jesus, that he, too, was delivered from execution.

[1065] The above saying is recorded in both Matthew (6:22-23) and Luke, both authors using the same source; Q. The saying speaks of the **sound eye** and the **evil eye**, which in

ancient Judaism often signified the *good way* and the *evil way*. Jesus is not referring to the physical eye, but rather to the spiritual eye, if it is good and sound i.e. the person is spiritually well and is able to identify the truth well, then their soul is well and filled with light. On the other hand, those who are spiritually blind are full of darkness.

[1066]

The above account is recorded in [Mark 7:1-23](#) and [Matthew 15:1-20](#), but the version in Luke is remarkably different. I suggest the reader check Mark's version which seems to have been the original, then turn to see how Matthew changes it and now Luke.

As opposed to both Mark and Matthew who write that *Pharisees* and *scribes* came from Jerusalem to watch his eating habits, in Luke he is invited to dine with a Pharisee. Before eating, the Pharisee notices in shock that Jesus himself does not ceremonially **wash his hands** before eating, but being rather polite, the host does not object or say anything to his guest. The objection is now not with the disciples of Jesus as Mark and Matthew record it, but with Jesus himself.

[1067] After seeing the shock on the Pharisee's face, Jesus erupts into a long tirade against the Pharisees as a whole. Both Mark and Matthew have Jesus say something completely different. The **cup** and **plate** would represent the Pharisees themselves, to which they only clean the outside, leaving the inside filthy and dirty, i.e. their appearances are pleasing to the people who think of them as holy men and righteous, but their insides are the complete opposite. The one who made them would refer to God Himself, who knows what is on the outside and well as the inside.

Verse 41 is an instruction; after criticising them, Jesus advises them to give the insides of the cup and plate to the poor in alms, and in such a way, they will be able to cleanse themselves. A similar teaching is written in the Holy Quran:

“Take from their wealth alms in order to cleanse them and purify them with it, and pray for them, verily your prayers are a source for security for them, and Allah is All-hearing, All-Knowing.” (9:103).

[1068] Textual Variant

Whilst the majority of manuscripts read as above, Codex Bezae reads: ‘the love of God’, omitting the rest of the verse. This some have said may be the influence of Marcion, who was a bishop who disliked the Old Testament. He created a version of the Gospel of Luke with most if not all references to the Old Testament removed since he disliked it. The scribe of the Codex Bezae may have had access to a manuscript written by a follower of Marcion who removed the latter part of the verse since it supports the Old Testament Laws.

Readers will have noticed how remarkably different the above account in Luke is with Mark/Matthew's version. How do we explain these differences? There are two options to explain the discrepancies. The first being that Jesus (or his disciples) were in fact criticised *twice* for not washing their hands: the first instance in Mark and Matthew, where Pharisees come from Jerusalem and observe Jesus: and the second time where Jesus is invited to dine with a Pharisee who then observes closely and wonders if this really is a prophet, due to him not complying with the tradition of the Pharisees.

This may be the case, but then the question arises as to why did Mark and Matthew omit the Lukan version of the event and why did Luke omit those of Mark and Matthew? To reconcile the two versions would require an interpreter to combine them; that it happened twice, but then why does no gospel record it twice? Why are readers of the gospels forced to create an alternative gospel, different from the ones we have?

The problem is that there are far too many similarities in all the accounts to say that it was two separate events in Jesus' life. So it couldn't have happened twice. The most likely

explanation is that Mark had access to a tradition about eating without washing, which he copied, and Matthew copied from Mark. Luke on the other hand had access to a different tradition about eating without washing, of which he wrote in his gospel instead of copying the one from Mark.

[1069] After the advice, Jesus follows with three Woes which resemble the Woes in Matthew 23. The first in verse 42 describes their concern for the minutest aspects compared to the real and deeper meaning of the Law. They tithe tiny herbs and forget the judgement and love of God. Tithing is the practice of giving one tenth of one's produce or booty to the head of state or Temple.

The second Woe refers to their practices of seeking the best and most important seats in the synagogues and seeking the attention of the public in the market places. The final Woe criticises them for what they are and their deception: they are like unmarked graves, where bones of the dead are buried below which can cause ritual defilement for people if they walk over them, but since they are unmarked, people are unaware and unwittingly come into contact with them and get contaminated.

[1070] The Pharisee seems to have invited others to the dinner as well, and a lawyer raises an objection to Jesus' Woes. It is highly unlikely that a lawyer did say the above, since it would imply that he saw himself being criticised as well, thus he felt he himself fitted the descriptions of the hypocritical Pharisees outlined by Luke above.

Instead of receiving an apology from Jesus, the latter turns on the lawyers. Three further Woes are spoken against the lawyers; the first (verse 46) accuses the lawyers for burdening the people with their interpretations of the Law. Their interpretations created a mass of regulations which proved incumbent on others. It does not mean that they themselves did not keep the same Laws, they did, but they focused on the minutiae details of the Law and passed over the fundamentals of justice which Jesus is attacking. The weak members of the synagogue found their extra legalistic traditions and interpretations very burdensome, which did not bother the lawyers at all. For the latter did not raise a finger to lighten the burden, which they should have. Take for example the thirty-nine classes of work which the lawyers prohibited on the Sabbath! (m.Sabb 7:2). These regulations made the Divine Law of the Sabbath, which was aimed to be a source of joy, incredibly burdensome for the people.

The second Woe may have been more relevant to the Pharisees than the lawyers. The latter are accused of building tombs of honour over prophets killed by their forefathers. They honour the dead prophets but pay no attention to living prophets; it is easy to honour the dead prophets since they speak no more, but to honour the living ones would require obedience and therefore loss of authority, which wouldn't have been applicable to the lawyers. The saying about God's wisdom (verse 49) seems to be a quote from the Old Testament, but its source has never been found, indeed the word *apostles* has stronger Christian connotations than Jewish, implying that it is not an Old Testament text. Since the foundation of the world, the pattern and trend has been that righteous people such as Abel and prophets have been opposed and persecuted by their people. Traditions indicate that numerous prophets have been murdered by the Jewish people: prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. However, whether these prophets were in fact murdered or not is unknown.

The final Woe refers to the fact that the key to unlock the knowledge of God, or the Torah, was given over to these lawyers. It was the key to the house which wisdom built (Proverbs 9:1). These lawyers, however, did not use the key; they did not enter the house nor did they permit anyone else to enter the house. As such, they did not permit any others to interpret the Law for them or to aid them and as such neglected much of the Law.

[1071] The final two verses have Jesus leaving the house where he was having dinner. The Pharisees and scribes then begin to react violently against him and begin to go through and check his utterances thoroughly so as to accuse him later.

[1072] The warning of the **yeast of the Pharisees** occurs in Mark 8:14-21 and Matthew 16:5-12. However, he seems to have given the warning in different situations in the

gospels. In Mark and Matthew, he warns his disciples about the **yeast of the Pharisees** directly after he feeds the four thousand. However, in Luke he warns them much later as the above shows. Either Jesus warns his disciples *twice*, on two different occasions or Luke decided to add it on another occasion in his gospel.

[1073] Since both Matthew (10:26-33) and Luke record the above saying of Jesus and not Mark, the source must be Q. Luke's version is almost identical to Matthew's, see notes under Matthew for an explanation of the above.

[1074] The above warning is from **Mark 3:28-30** where Jesus says it after being accused of being demon-possessed. The point is that all sins of mankind will be forgiven. But he who **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit**, he will never be forgiven. Jesus being possessed by the power of God is accused of being possessed by the power of demons and false gods. Being a prophet of God, Jesus was extremely jealous and protective of his Lord, and makes a radical and powerful statement; that they may malign Jesus himself, but not the revelation he received from God which is delivered to Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

[1075] The fate of the disciples is spoken about in **Mark 13:9-13**, and twice in Matthew (10:17-25 and 24:9-14). No surprise that Luke too records it twice as well then; in the above and later in 21:12-19. With regards to the above, the predictions of what the disciples will go through again are doubtful. Many scholars hold the view that these words were placed in Jesus' mouth after the events had actually taken place. The predictions are 'too accurate', since this is exactly what happened after Jesus: many of his disciples were beaten and taken to the governors, even Paul is included, who was beaten and imprisoned many times (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

[1076] While Jesus is teaching his disciples he is interrupted by a man having issues getting his share of the **inheritance**, who then asks Jesus to intervene. This then sets up Jesus for his next teaching/parable regarding the Rich Fool. Jesus has no concern for such worldly affairs and does not wish to be judge over such matters, but simply teaches them to avoid them; that they are meagre in comparison to the next and eternal life, where man's possessions are of no consequence.

[1077] After the man from the crowd asks Jesus to intercede on his behalf against his brother regarding the inheritance, Jesus warns against avarice and follows through with the above parable.

[1078] The lesson in the parable is self-explanatory; the farmer stored up many goods and plans to store up even more. He then plans to live a life of comfort and ease. But he neglects one very important factor; that his time is going to end that very night. Thus all his efforts and planning come to naught as he will not be able to bring any of it to the next life. He stored up many things in the present life and neglected the next life for which he should have been storing good deeds and actions.

[1079] As explained below, the source of Luke is the same as that of **Matthew 6:25-34**, but the context and setting is different; in that Jesus said the above much later in his ministry than he does in Matthew.

[1080] The saying is about having complete and utter trust in God; not to be anxious about the next day, nor about food or water. However, this text has been the object of harsh criticism by numerous authors and writers; it is said that every 'starving sparrow' contradicts the saying (J. Weiss, 293), and there are also famines and wars which again go against the teaching above. Not only that, but the divine dream of Joseph to store food for seven years in preparation for the years of famine also shows that such a teaching has its weakness *if* taken literally.

Therefore, if the above saying is authentic, it must be against those people who were excessively anxious, who continually worry about food and drink and what to wear. The teaching is also echoed in later Jewish works: Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar states something very similar:

“Have you even seen a wild animal or a bird practising a craft? Yet they are provided for without any effort on their part although they were created only to serve me. But I was created to serve my Maker. How much more might not I be provided for without any effort on my part?” (Talmud, mKid 4:14).

A similar concept exists in the Islamic tradition as well, God declares in the Holy Quran: “Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?” (39:37). This verse has a special connection with the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him). It was in 1876 where his father fell gravely ill, and the Promised Messiah thought about the sad demise of his father and the hard days that would soon be approaching; days of poverty ahead and unstable financial support crossed his mind. However, before his father passed away, there were two revelations that were revealed to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad: One was about his father’s approaching departure from the world. The second revelation from Allah was the above Quranic verse. When this revelation was revealed, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad felt a sense of relief and contentment that Allah would take care of him and his needs. In turn, he had the verse engraved on his ring which was a constant reminder of God’s support and help.

[1081] Important Words

The Received Text from which the WEB and KJV version is based reads *Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his height?* However, the more recent editions of the Bible such as Westcott & Hort and Nestle Aland from which the RSV translation is based read as above. I have opted for the more modern and more accurate editions and translations of the Bible.

[1082] Important Words

ἔθνη (*ethnā*) – Noun, nominative plural, neuter of ἔθνος (*ethnos*) meaning: *nation; people; often used to designate non-Jews; Gentiles; foreigners*. Although I have translated the word as *Gentiles* in Matthew above, Luke seems to add *of the world*, thus the translation of *nations* would be more suitable. Luke also most likely meant nations as opposed to Gentiles, since he himself was a Gentile, and to paint himself and his audience in such a poor light would not have gone down well.

[1083] Both Matthew and Luke have taken the account from the same source, that being Q. The whole passage is about trust, trust in God. It should not be taken literally as it would only encourage laziness, but Jesus is most likely warning against excessive attachment to the world. People should care more for the next life than they should for this life. It is likely that Jesus preached such a message to his disciples and others to encourage them to join his community and increase their spirituality. Trust in God is essential in the path to spiritual enlightenment; such a message is also given in the Holy Quran: “Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?” (Holy Quran, 39:37). Such is the message of Islam, where even Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) had the verse engraved on a ring after receiving it as revelation when worldly issues began to trouble him. Thereafter he remained content and comfortable that Allah would never forsake him.

[1084] The above saying is also recorded in Matthew 6:19-21, however, Luke’s version is more extreme, with Jesus instructing his disciples to sell their possessions and give the proceeds to the needy. The context and setting in Luke is also different from that of Matthew’s; in Luke Jesus states the above much later in his ministry as compared to Matthew. Thus either Jesus spoke the same words, or similar words twice, or more likely that both Matthew and Luke were using the same source (Q) and chose to place Jesus’ words in different places in their gospels.

The emphasis in the saying is that people should do good deeds which they will store up in Heaven, which will not diminish or be in danger, unlike the treasures people hoard on earth which are prone to degenerate or be stolen. Furthermore, that which is hoarded and worked for, the heart of the person is normally focused on it and the person will

devote much time to it. Thus one should work on things which will bring them closer to God; which will remind them of God and draw them nearer to Him, focusing their hearts on God as supposed to temporary worldly things.

It has often been stated by some Christians that the reward and punishment system in Islam is lower than that of Christianity. The latter's focus being on belief and not necessary works, for it is *belief* that will make one *right* with God, or make one *OK* with God. What is one to believe? That Jesus is divine and that he died for our sins. This is what leads to heavenly reward.

However, as can be seen above, this is exactly what Jesus is stating; he is stressing good deeds and works; that people should perform good actions and works for the sake of God and in return they will be rewarded by God in the hereafter. Thus like in Islam, Jesus (and his brother James for that matter; James 2:14-17) taught belief in God *and* good works; both of these are to be done by followers to attain salvation.

[1085] Both Mark (13:33-37) and Matthew (24:42-51) have the above saying, although Mark's version is significantly shorter. Luke's account is similar to Matthew, which may point to the saying being recorded by both the author Mark and the author of Q. There are three main sections: the first is regarding the watchful servants; the second is about the watchful head of the household; and the third is the servant in the lord's absence.

[1086]

The first account in verses 35 to 38 is only recorded in Luke's Gospel, and is about alertness of the servant who awaits the coming of his master from a marriage feast. So grateful will the master be and so overjoyed regarding their obedience that he himself would set them down and begin serving them!

[1087]

The second section is in verses 39 and 40 and speaks of the alertness of the head of the household; the verses are almost identical to Matthew's 24:43 and speak about the householder being fully alert if a thief was to come to his house, and likewise the disciples should also be alert.

[1088] Peter interjects in verse 41 asking if this teaching is for the disciples or everyone. Jesus simply ignores the question and moves on to further warnings; the third section, which again is from Q since Matthew also has the same section above. The final two verses are regarding the duties of the servant; if the servant is fully aware of the will of his lord/master, and does not follow his instructions, he will in turn receive a severe thrashing. But the servant who does not know the will of his lord/master, he will receive a lighter thrashing, since he did not disobey the master, but rather showed incompetence since he should have been aware.

The above three accounts recorded in the gospels are all about being watchful and aware. But as can be seen above, all accounts are different. Mark's version is very short, Matthew's is a little longer and Luke's is much longer. So, what did Jesus *really* say? If he spoke all that is recorded in Luke, why do Mark and Matthew omit so much? The answer is simply that each author had access to slightly different traditions and simply recorded them in their gospels. To find out which traditions are historically correct is virtually impossible.

[1089] Both Matthew 10:34-36 and Luke record the above saying, but Luke's version is softer, removing the reference of the *sword* and instead replacing it with **division**. The saying itself has changed a great deal, but the overall message is the same: Jesus is talking about division rather than bringing war. He did not come to bring about reconciliation among the people, but rather division. Every prophet naturally creates divisions when he preaches to a community, as a man may turn to that prophet's teachings against the wishes of his family and thus create division in the household and community.

However, what did Jesus exactly say? Since the wordings of the message in Matthew and Luke are very different. It is very unlikely if Jesus spoke the words above twice, since

they are too similar. Rather, the answer lies in that both Matthew and Luke had access to the Q document and rephrased the message according to their own style of writing.

[1090] **Matthew 16: 2-3** is repeated by Luke as well, but this too is in a completely different context and setting; the above occurring after Jesus speaks about divisions within households, while in Matthew it is just before Jesus gives the Sign of Jonah.

[1091] The above saying in Luke is loosely linked to **Mark 11:25-26** and **Matthew 5:21-26**. Luke speaks of the the **judge** and settling scores with your accuser before you get into trouble. This is referring to the next life, where Jesus is telling his followers to settle the score with anyone they have mistreated or offended, before such actions may be used against them in the court of God.

[1092] The two disasters, the murdered **Galileans** and the ones who died by the tower of **Siloam**, are not spoken of anywhere outside the Gospel of Luke, which has cast some doubt as to whether they really occurred. However, it should come as no surprise if Pilate did murder some Galileans since he was renowned for his extreme cruelty; see under **Mark 15:2** for more details.

After hearing the news of the murder of the Galileans, being a Galilean himself, the reader may have expected Jesus to go into a tirade of curses on the Romans, yet he does not, but rather speaks of repentance and patience. The eighteen Galileans have suffered greatly but it was not due to their excessive sins, for they are no worse than the remaining Galileans. These Galileans should serve as a warning and a lesson to the others and should force them to stop and repent for any sins they have committed. Likewise, the death of those in Jerusalem when the tower fell upon them, these were also no more guilty than anyone else, but faced a speedy death and so the people in Jerusalem should contemplate and repent.

[1093] The second part of the account above is the parable of the **fig-tree**. This differs remarkably from Mark and Matthew, who have written the event literally and placed Jesus as the curser. In the Lukan account the parable is about patience and is a dire warning. It is a warning in the sense that the fig-tree would signify the people, and those people who do not bear fruit, the metaphor of fruit signifies *deeds* or works (Isa 3:10, Jer 17:10) will be cut down. Why should they be permitted to live and not produce any good works? They are only taking up resources and are in essence a waste of space and resources. Yet, at the same time there is hope, and Jesus is speaking of a certain extension given to the people. They have a little more time to bear fruit, but if they still persist, then they will be destroyed.

[1094] Important Words

καταίσχονοντο (*kataischononto*) – verb imperfect passive indicative 3rd plural of καταίσχυνω (*kataischyno*) meaning: *bring to shame, disgrace, dishonour* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translate the above as *disappointed*, however, disgraced is a better translation. The RSV states that they were *put to shame* which is similar to my translation.

[1095] After the parable of the fig-tree, Luke records Jesus teaching in a **synagogue**. The above story is not present in any of the other gospels, but its message is essentially the same as many other narratives about healing on the Sabbath. See *Plucking Grain on the Sabbath* (**Mark 2:23-28**) or *The Man with the Withered Hand* (**Mark 3:1-6**) for similar accounts, the basic message being the same; that the Sabbath rules are not as stringent as the Pharisees and other Jews interpreted, but good actions and deeds are still permissible and even encouraged.

[1096] The setting in Luke for the above parable is completely different from that in **Mark 4:30-32** and **Matthew 13:31-32**. In Mark Jesus says it very early in his ministry, and in

Matthew it is after Jesus heals many by the sea. Luke has a completely different setting. So either Jesus spoke the same parable twice in his ministry, or more likely that the gospel writers simply had access to the tradition and wrote it in their gospels in a rather random fashion.

[1097] Luke's version is closer to Matthew, where he likens the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed thrown into a man's garden. The parable may have also existed in Q with subtle differences: The Kingdom of God is likened to the **mustard seed**; the seed itself may not be the smallest in the world, but its diameter is little more than a millimetre making it a noticeably small seed. It grows to about two or three metres tall, and whilst not being a very large tree it does become a very large plant or tree. Thus the contrast of the original size of the seed compared to the end result is presented.

What has this all got to do with the kingdom of God, and why is this small seed likened to it? That the kingdom of God be likened to a large tree is understandable, in Ezek 17:22-24 the future kingdom is likened to the cedar which is much larger than the mustard plant. Thus the parable focuses more on the tiny and insignificant mustard seed, which may imply that the Kingdom of God is ushered in not by heavenly armies and angels, but rather on a smaller scale, by Jesus and his few disciples; not by battles and victories against the Roman armies, but rather by the healings and exorcisms of the disciples of Jesus. It will be through these small powers that will lead to a creation of a large community, in which people will join and live, much like the birds live in the mustard plant in the parable.

[1098] The above is from Q, since both Matthew 13:34-35 and Luke record it in their gospels. The kingdom of heaven is likened to **leaven**. The **measures** of flour would surprise the original readers, as three measures is roughly forty litres of flour, enough for a meal to feed one hundred and fifty people; so an ordinary housewife was not intended here. The meaning of the parable would refer to the subtle emergence of the kingdom of Heaven, which when planted among many people will influence all. It was thus the mission and duty of the disciples to plant or mix Jesus' teachings and message among the masses and enable them to spread and influence them.

[1099] After Jesus preached about the Kingdom of God, he begins travelling through some cities and villages. Whilst on his journey, someone (perhaps a disciple) is obviously concerned about the hereafter, and asks him rather worriedly about the number of people being saved. Jesus' reply in verse 24 is sourced from Q and has its parallel in Matthew 7:13-14. He does not answer the question directly, mostly due to him simply not knowing, for only God would know how/who would be saved and admitted into heaven. Instead, Jesus warns the questioner that the path to heaven is narrow and that everyone should attempt to stick to it, but admits that only a few will actually enter.

[1100] Jesus then moves onto another parable in verses 25-27. The parable has some similarities to The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13); the final message being the same in essence. It is not only through human effort one is able to attain salvation, but it also depends on the head of the household (Master of the Kingdom/God), who in the above parable seems to refer to Jesus, as opposed to God in Matthew's account about the ten virgins. Luke most likely wished to place the responsibility of judgement in the hands of Jesus as opposed to God as Matthew does.

Luke further elaborates that the **Lord** is Jesus since the people outside who knock on the door cry out that they followed the Master, ate and drank with him while he preached in their streets. But the Master, i.e. Jesus, replies that he does not know them and refuses to open the door to them. The Matthean version: The Parable of the Ten Virgins is likely to be more accurate and originate from Jesus as opposed to the above, since the final judgement and decision of admittance into Paradise should lie on God rather than on Jesus, who was simply a prophet of God (see under John 5:30 for further details).

[1101] Verses 28-30 now move completely away from the narrow door and discuss the situation of Paradise, where those who have made it through the narrow door before it closes sit with the prophets of old and are joyous and happy. The verse is linked to Matthew 8:11 which was in fact a prophecy of the arrival of non-Jews to the kingdom and most likely refers to the coming of Islam. Verse 29 in the Lukan version is no different and speaks of the coming of Islam, since the very next verse (30) speaks of those coming

last (the Muslims) will be first and those who came first (the Jews) will be last, showing the order of priority of admittance into heaven. It is impossible to know when Jesus did speak the above prophecy about the arrival of others into the Kingdom of God (verse 29), since he seems to say it in completely different contexts and settings in Matthew and Luke.

Likewise, it is very difficult to know for certain when Jesus spoke the words about last being first and first being last, and in what context. As shown above, he seems to say it numerous times in different settings and contexts.

[1102] Following on from the previous chapter, Luke now has a rather difficult passage which seems strange and out of place. The author seems to contradict himself elsewhere where he (Luke) states that Antipas was no threat to Jesus at all (Luke 9:9 and Luke 23:8). Either the author got his facts incorrect or, as some have speculated, the Pharisees simply lied to remove Jesus from Galilee. It is also interesting and strange that the Pharisees here seem to show some concern for Jesus as opposed to them continuously trying to kill him, or perhaps this is a time earlier than that in which Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. Jesus referring to Antipas as a fox may be an example of his sharp tongue, referring to a king as a lowly, cowardly animal.

The final verse is very unlikely to be authentic and must be the words of the author himself, since as is shown continuously in this book, Jesus never expected or claimed that he would die. The above verse has Jesus predict his death; that it would not take place in Galilee, but rather in Jerusalem, most likely on the cross according to the author. Furthermore, the statement that it is not acceptable that a prophet die outside of Jerusalem is grossly inaccurate, since out of all the Old Testament prophets, very few in fact did die in Jerusalem; the closest prophet to Jesus, his own cousin John the Baptist, did not die in Jerusalem! Thus the verse is likely to be the invention of the author of the gospel himself.

[1103] Both Matthew (23:37-39) and Luke record Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem. The saying is exactly the same, however, he seems to have said it on different occasions according to the gospels. In Matthew, Jesus laments over the city while *he is in* Jerusalem, but Luke has him lament over Jerusalem much earlier in his ministry *before* he goes to Jerusalem.

Thus the reader is left baffled about when Jesus said the above? Did he say the exact same words twice? Once, whilst in Galilee after being warned that Herod wishes to kill him and the other instance in the Temple itself whilst people eagerly listened to him? It is highly unlikely that he would have spoken the words twice, which in turn shows that both Matthew and Luke had access to the tradition (in Q) but were uncertain of where to put it. As explained under Matthew above, it is likely to have been a post-crucifixion saying, and sadly neither author understood it so and placed it rather randomly in their gospels making nonsense of it.

[1104] After the lament over Jerusalem, Jesus then enters the house of a leading Pharisee for a meal. As with other passages throughout the gospels, the above is all about the Sabbath and how to obey the instruction of Sabbath observance. The view of Jesus is that it is not to be followed in such a strict sense as laid out by many Jews, particularly the Pharisees, but some leeway is to be permitted, particularly when it comes to the life and health of people. See under Mark 3:2 for more details on the Sabbath Law.

[1105] Jesus is still in the house of one of the leading Pharisees when he notices that many of them intentionally sit at certain seats; the best ones would probably mean the ones closest to the head table. This triggers further parables and teachings; one for the appropriate behaviours of guests and the other for the hosts, both of which are full of wisdom and still applicable in this day and age, and we see no reason for rejecting the saying as inauthentic.

The first parable (8-11) is aimed at the guests; they are instructed not to seek honour themselves by heading for the best seats, for they then risk being humiliated when

someone of greater rank arrives and they are thus forced to move down to the lower seats. Instead, Jesus teaches that real honour is only where it is placed on people by others; when the guest arrives, he should sit at the lowest place and when seen by the host, will be taken and led to the higher place, thus risking no humiliation but rather glory in front of others on his table. The teaching does not originate from Jesus, but rather is an echo of an Old Testament teaching found in the book of Proverbs: "Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great; for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the prince" (25:6-7). Jesus ends with a warning to the people: those who seek to exult themselves will be humbled or humiliated and those who humble themselves will be exulted.

[1106] The second lesson (11-14) is focused on the hosts and is a lesson on doing good without expecting any reward. The host should not invite his family, friends and rich neighbours who in turn will invite the host back for their marriage feasts, rather the host should invite four classes of people who were generally avoided by the Jewish people. Thus the host will be doing such actions in which he will receive no reward in this world, but rather in the next; where he will be raised on the day of resurrection with the righteous.

It may be worth noting that Jesus tells the hosts that they will be rewarded for their *actions* in the next life, which goes against the very Pauline idea that men are only justified by faith and that works are of no use. In the above the hosts are rewarded in the next life, not for their faith in Jesus, but for their *actions* in this world; thus even those who do not have faith in Jesus are spoken of as being rewarded in the next life.

[1107] After teaching the guests and hosts how to behave, Jesus then moves onto the Parable of the Great Supper. In fact, Jesus gives a very similar saying in [Matthew 22:1-14](#), but instead of a *king*, Luke's version speaks of a **man**. The story is the same, the king/man makes a feast and invites people but they decline. In Matthew, the King is angry and destroys the people who refuse, in Luke the man does not have the authority to do so, so rather ignores those who don't come. The king/man then asks his servants to go to the **streets and highways** to grab people and invite them to the feast.

The essential and final message is still the same; that those who are invited by God but make excuses will be excluded from the Kingdom of God, which in turn will be given to others.

Did Jesus speak of the same story twice with minor modifications? The two accounts are remarkably similar, but contain numerous differences and are spoken by Jesus in completely different settings. Scholars are unanimous that the saying was in the Q source to which both Matthew and Luke had access, but both authors made significant modifications to the text. Again, it is unlikely that Jesus would have spoken and given the two parables twice, with the essential message being the same. It is felt that the Matthean version of the parable is closer to the original saying of Jesus as opposed to the Lukan, since it displays many more Jewish characteristics.

[1108]

Matthew, too, records a similar saying, in [10:37-39](#). However, Luke goes one step further and has Jesus say that you must **hate** your family in order to be a disciple as opposed to Matthew's version where one was to simply love Jesus more. It is likely that this saying is more primitive than Matthew's as it is only natural that one would tone down the saying rather than heighten it.

The reader may recall Jesus' earlier saying in On Love of One's Enemies ([Luke 6:27-36](#)) where Jesus instructs his disciples to love their enemies and do good to them. There is an obvious conflict with that teaching and the above instruction to hate, not one's enemies, but rather one's family! For those interpreters who argue that the gospels must be interpreted literally, this conflict cannot be resolved. It can only mean that Jesus said one thing, but then contradicted himself later, which obviously cannot be the case for Christians or Muslims.

[1109] Jesus outlines three conditions of discipleship. The first (v26) calls for a willingness to put parents, family and even one's own life aside, making all these secondary to the importance of discipleship. The second (v27) calls for the disciple to carry his own cross for the sake of Jesus. The final and third condition (v28-32) involves thorough consideration on the part of the disciple, to think it through in detail whether he wishes to be a disciple and if so, then to be willing to renounce all that they own for the sake of the community.

[1110] The saying on salt is also in Matthew 5:13. However, Jesus seems to say it a lot earlier in his ministry than Luke. He either said it twice, or more likely that the authors Matthew and Luke did not know the context and simply inserted it wherever they saw fit.

[1111] The above saying is also recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 18:10-14, therefore it must have been from the source Q. However, the context is different, in Luke Jesus is surrounded by **tax-collectors and sinners** who aren't present in Matthew's version. The other subtle change is that Luke has the man **carry** the sheep back to celebrate with his friends, which Matthew doesn't record.

The sheep would signify new converts to the Church, and one lost sheep would point to the loss of faith or belief of the new convert. The shepherd will drop everything to go in search of this lost sheep, and so should members of the Church do so to bring back the lost convert. Once the lost convert is brought back to the church, all its members will then celebrate. In like manner does God celebrate the return of the new convert as well.

The Prophet of Islam gave a similar parable:

Nu'man b. Bashir reported:

"Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a believing servant than of a person who set out on a journey with a provision of food and drink on the back of his camel. He went on until he came to a waterless desert and he felt like sleeping. So he got down under the shade of a tree and was overcome by sleep and his camel ran away. As he got up he tried to see (the camel) standing upon a mound. but did not find it. He then got upon the other mound, but could not see anything. He then climbed upon the third mound but did not see anything until he came back to the place where he had been previously. And as he was sitting (in utter disappointment) there came to him the camel, till that (camel) placed its nose string in his hand. Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than the person who found (his lost camel) in this very state." (Sahih Muslim, Book 37, Number 6616, made available by www.sunnah.com).

[1112] This parable is very similar to The Parable of the Lost Sheep in the previous section. The main difference is that instead of a relatively rich shepherd, the woman depicted above seems quite poor. Again, the essential message is about regaining a lost sinner.

[1113] Luke ends the chapter with a final parable about forgiveness. The **father** in the parable represents God Himself; the lesson is that God, like the father in the parable, will readily accept a repentant sinner. The door to forgiveness is always open to the repentant and never shut. Interestingly enough, there is no mention of the doctrine of atonement in the parable, which according to the majority of Christians is the only way one is able to attain true forgiveness and salvation. In the above parable, the son/sinner goes directly to his father/God and seeks his forgiveness which is immediately granted; there is no intermediary, no sacrifice. The parable is thus very close to the teachings of Islam and no doubt comes from the historical Jesus.

Some Christians may argue that a sacrifice is mentioned in verse 23 above, however, the sole purpose of the killing of the fattened calf is for food. It was not sacrificed to take on the son's sins, nor did it have any significance but to serve as food in the celebrations the father wished to hold.

The answer lies in the opinions of the authors of the gospels; as explained in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, Matthew was a Jewish Christian who also was a firm follower of the Law, whilst Luke was a Gentile Pauline Christian, who believed that the Law was abrogated by the coming of Jesus. Luke's view can be seen in verse 16 above, which was the argument of Paul (Galatians 3:24).

However, Luke then makes a major blunder in verse 17, where after stating that the Law was only until the coming of John the Baptist, he then states the eternity of the Law! It seems he was simply copying from his source text (Q) without much thought of what he was writing. For a full explanation of the importance of the Law and Jesus' opinion on it, see notes under Matthew's version in [5:17-20](#).

[1121] You might have noticed that the above instruction is a lot shorter than both Mark and Matthew's version. [Mark 10:2-12](#) and Matthew [5:27-32/19:3-12](#) both have some context behind Jesus' instruction. Luke seems to have read about the instruction and just plonked it into a random discourse. He might have omitted the background and Jesus' arguments from the Genesis account about God creating man and woman to be one flesh due to his audience being Gentile and not knowing anything about the Law.

[1122] Jesus finally ends his parables with one final a lengthy and detailed one regarding negligence and riches. Since Jesus is still in the Pharisee's house and conversing with them, there is little doubt that the parable is about them. It begins contrasting two types of people on opposite ends of the spectrum; one is rich and lives lavishly, whilst the other is poor and is seriously ill. The latter sits by the gate of the former in the hope that he will receive some scraps from the rich man's table, whilst the rich man has no concern for the well-being of the poor man.

Both men die and in the afterlife their roles are reversed. The rich man begs **Abraham** to ask **Lazarus** to give him even a **drop of water**, but even this is denied, as is his request to send Lazarus to his brothers to warn them of the hereafter. If the brothers do not listen to the teachings of the Old Testament, they will reject the words of a dead man as well.

The above parable is very likely to have come from Jesus, since it speaks of a dire warning against riches and negligence. It should also be noted that the response from Abraham was that the brothers of the rich man have Moses and the Prophets, and these were enough to attain salvation, as opposed to any belief in Jesus' divinity or atonement. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

The name of the poor man is also interesting, in that it would remind later readers of the story of the resuscitation of Lazarus in John's Gospel ([John 11:1-44](#)). Many scholars believe that the name of the poor man was not part of the original text (as Jesus' parables hardly ever named their people) and that it was inserted into the Lukan text at a later date, most likely being influenced by the Gospel of John's account.

[1123] The above saying is actually a copy of [Mark 9:41](#), see notes in Mark for a detailed explanation of the saying. However, the context is completely different, since in Mark Jesus is in Capernaum and in a house of one of his disciples, while in Luke he is in the house of a Pharisee. Furthermore, in Mark's Gospel, a few verses earlier a child is presented to Jesus whom he blesses and then speaks saying the above warning, referring to the innocence of the child: **little one**. However, in Luke Jesus suddenly speaks the above, referring to **little ones**, what little ones? Luke seems to have made a bit of a blunder while copying Mark referring to children when there weren't any in his narrative.

[1124] The above is from the source Q, since both Luke and [Matthew \(18:21-22\)](#) record the saying. However, again, the setting is different in the gospels: In Matthew Jesus is in Capernaum and Peter asks him about forgiveness, while in Luke Peter is not mentioned.

Jesus speaks about forgiving a man who sins against you **seven times a day**, but then keeps asking for forgiveness. Such a person should be forgiven. In fact it surpasses what Peter was expecting, i.e. there is no real limit to one's forgiveness. The Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave similar teachings in this respect: Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: Messenger of Allah! how often shall I forgive a servant? He gave no reply, so the man repeated what he had said, but he still kept silence. When he asked a third time, he replied: Forgive him seventy times daily." (Sunan Abi Dawud 5164, made available by www.sunnah.com).

[1125] A very similar saying also occurs in [Mark 11:19-24](#) and [Matthew 21:20-22](#). The context in Mark and Matthew is the same; Jesus and his disciples being in Jerusalem. But Luke is different, since he hasn't gone to Jerusalem yet. While the saying is slightly different, the message is identical; the power of prayer.

Instead of a *mountain* as Mark and Matthew state, Jesus refers to a **sycamine tree**. Again, Christians have been forced to understand and interpret the saying allegorically, purely for the reason that they themselves are unable to perform any of the miracles Jesus does and thus proving that they do not have as much faith as a mustard seed.

[1126] The above parable spoken by Jesus is to remind people of who they are and their status. The above servant works two jobs; one in the field and the other when he returns home to make supper for his master. He is to know his place and not to expect more. In the same way, men are to know their place, and not expect so much from God.

[1127] Jesus then moves off from the Pharisee's house and travels towards Jerusalem. He stops off at a certain village, but just before entering, he encounters **ten lepers**, who are standing outside; they may have been cast out so as not to infect others. They cry out for help and Jesus responds by telling them to go and show themselves to the Priest, an Old Testament instruction for lepers (Lev 13:49). Whilst on their way, they realise that they have been cured; nine of them (presumably Jews) go off happy, but the tenth (a Samaritan) sees that he is cured and returns to Jesus and gives thanks. The latter responds in surprise, that out of the ten, only one (a foreigner) returns to give thanks, whilst the others (Jews) walk off.

If the above account is to be taken literally and at face value, then the simple lesson is to give thanks to God for all that He does to people. However, it is likely that there is more to the account than this; it is no doubt linked to Jesus' visit and acceptance by the Samaritans *after* his crucifixion ordeal. See under [Luke 9: 51-56](#), Jesus Rejected by Samaritans for details on Jesus' supposed rejection and later acceptance by the Samaritans.

[1128] Throughout Luke's Gospel, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Kingdom of God: it is mentioned in the Lord's Prayer (11:2); it is something seen (9:27); and Jesus instructs his disciples to go and proclaim that the Kingdom has come near (10:9). Naturally, Jesus' audience would ask when it will actually come. Jesus answers that they should not seek its time or place, but rather know that it has come and is among them; that being the Messianic Era. Thus the above may well have been spoken by Jesus after he declared himself to be the Messiah. See under [Matthew 3:2](#) for more details on the Kingdom of God/Heaven.

[1129] Luke continues from the previous chapter where Jesus warns his disciples concerning his second coming. He is not yet in Jerusalem when he speaks the above, which differs remarkably from the setting in [Matthew 24:37-41](#) where Jesus speaks the same, or similar words to his disciples in Jerusalem after preaching in the Temple *in* Jerusalem. Could it be that Jesus gave the same warning to his disciples twice and in the space of a few days? This is unlikely since in Matthew, Jesus tells them only after they specifically ask, which they would not have done had Jesus told them already a few days prior.

[1130] In Luke, after answering the questions of the Pharisees, Jesus moves on to explaining the days of his second coming to his disciples. The above is no doubt from the Q source, since both Matthew and Luke have similar accounts, but Luke expands on it much more. Verses 22-27 have their parallels in [Matthew 24:37-41](#), where Jesus warns them not to follow false Christs who come here and there, and that his second coming will occur like **lightning**, or all of a sudden as the **flood**. But verse 25 is awkward and seems

out of place. Whilst Jesus is speaking of his second coming, Luke seems to insert a passion prediction (see Mark 8:31-33, Jesus Foretells His Passion) in the middle of the text, which makes it quite nonsensical. Without it the text flows smoothly and is in line with Matthew's account.

[1131] Luke also likens the second coming to Prophet Lot and the destruction of **Sodom** in verses 28-32. The emphasis is the same as in the story of Noah, but an additional warning is placed, where the disciples are instructed to remember the disbelief of Lot's wife and not to imitate her; they are not to turn around when the day comes. For details concerning the second coming of Jesus, see [Matthew 24:32-36](#).

[1132] **Important Words**

ψυχὴν (*psukhayn*) – Noun, accusative singular, feminine of ψυχή (*psukhay*) meaning: *life as in natural worldly life or soul; the inner self* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1133] **Important Words**

αὐτῆν (*autayn*) – Pronoun, genitive singular, feminine of αὐτός (*autos*) meaning: *her*. Since the noun for life/soul is feminine, so is its pronoun.

[1134] See [Mark 8:34-38](#), "If Any Man Would Come after Me..." for the interpretation of verse 33.

[1135] Verses 34 and 35 are again from Q and speak of the gathering of the elect; see under [Matthew 24: 40-41](#) above for further details.

[1136] **Textual Variant**

Verse 36 is omitted by manuscript P75, Codex Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and many other early ones, whilst it is contained in Codex Bezae and the Received Text and reads: 'Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.' It is likely that a scribe wrote it in from its parallel, in Matthew 24:40 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.230).

[1137] After teaching about the coming of the son of man, Luke has Jesus drive the point further with the parable of the Unjust Judge. Verse 1 is the introductory verse and gives the reason why Jesus is giving the parable; it is to encourage the disciples to pray more often and not lose heart. The actual parable begins with verse 2 and ends with verse 5. The parable is about persistence. If a **widow** is able to make an **unrighteous judge** listen to her and able to make him vindicate her, how much more would a just God do for His elect? The emphasis, therefore, is on persistence and continuous prayer.

The question yet remains of what the purpose was of the unjust judge? In the above parable, the unjust judge is actually likened to God, in effect representing God, but how could that be? How is God likened to an unjust judge? It was for this reason that verses 7 and 8 were appended to the text. These two verses or at least up until the first part of verse 8 emphasise the same point and talk about God in a much lighter and better way. The latter part of verse 8 is awkward and seems out of place, and is most likely not part of the original saying.

It is not certain whether the above parable can be traced back to Jesus; the fact that the parable likens God to an unjust judge is difficult, and verses 7 and 8 seem to be additions made to resolve this difficulty. Yet, it speaks of people praying day and night, something which the Gentile Church may not have been keen to practise, since for the Gentile Church faith was more important than deeds, and thus praying excessively was unlikely to have been practised. This fact may point to the parable coming from Jesus

himself. The arguments on either side are strong; the emphasis is on prayer and persistence, two actions all prophets taught, particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) adding strength to the possibility that it may well have originated from Jesus.

[1138] Jesus continues with further parables. In these, two types of worshippers are contrasted; the first is a self-righteous **Pharisee**, whose prayer is an expression of thankfulness, but it is closer to a boast, as he begins with a negative approach in thanking God for not making him a sinner, and then he further boasts, showing off to God, that he fasts and pays much in His service. By contrast is the **tax-collector** who had sinned in the eyes of God; the reader is not told exactly what the sin is, most likely some sort of extortion. Either way, he is embarrassed to come even close to God, since he stands far off and cannot muster the courage to look up at God. Instead, he beats his chest and begs for forgiveness, admitting that he is a sinner.

For Jesus, the latter is justified or made righteous before God, since his prayer was far more genuine and from the heart, as opposed to the arrogant and boastful prayer of the Pharisee. The final verse extends the admonition to Jesus' disciples as well and emphasises humility and sincerity in prayer.

This last verse of Jesus is interesting as well, since it directly opposes Paul's ideas. In Gal 2:16 Paul states:

“that a man is not *justified* from works of the Law rather through the faith of Christ Jesus, and we have faith in Christ, so that we may be made righteous from the faith of Christ and not from works of the Law...”

However, Jesus states clearly in the above that the tax-collector was **justified** or made righteous by simply asking God for forgiveness. There is no mention of accepting a human sacrifice, no mention of having faith in Jesus or anything of what Paul states in his letters.

[1139] The above is from the Gospel of **Mark (10:13-16)**. Children are brought to Jesus for him to bless, but his disciples act like gate-keepers who begin to tell off the children and parents and keep them away from Jesus. However, the latter in turn instructs the disciples to leave them alone and permit them to come to him. For in these, his disciples can learn an important lesson; that one should become like a child to enter the Kingdom of God.

This verse has caused quite a few debates amongst Christians, how is one to be like a child? In what way should they imitate a child to enter the Kingdom of God? There are two possible and most likely ways: that of complete reliance on God, as a child has complete reliance on their parents; or that one should be content with what one has, much like children are content.

[1140] Luke's account is almost identical to that of **Mark 10:17-22**, the latter being his source. See notes under Mark for a detailed commentary.

[1141] The context and setting in Luke is the same as in **Mark 10:23-30**. He is using the text of Mark, and makes very slight modifications to his text; mainly summarising certain points, but these are negligible.

[1142] The above account is very similar to **Mark 10:31-34**. For a detailed explanation of the made-up prophecy, see under **Mark 8:31-33**. However, Luke does make an interesting modification in the final verse (34). This is a good example of a *double insertion* made by some later scribes.

Luke copied the text of Mark, having Jesus prophesy his arrest and death, but a later scribe realised the fatal trap into which Luke falls; that after being told so many times

about what will happen to Jesus, one would expect the disciples to recall these numerous prophecies which were made just a few days prior to it all happening: They would celebrate the fulfilment of the prophecies and patiently wait for the third day and wait for the return of Jesus. Yet, according to the gospels themselves, at the time of arrest, the disciples flee in fear, forsaking him (Mark 14:50). Peter even denies knowing Jesus (Mark 14:66-72), and when the disciples are told by the women that Jesus had risen from the dead, they do not believe them (Luke 24:11).

Thus to resolve this problem, a later scribe thought to add the verse that the saying was **hidden from them** and they could not **understand** it, making nonsense of everything. Why would Jesus tell them something which was hidden from them and how could they not understand the very simple saying? They seemed to have understood the exact same prophecy in the other instances. It all points to later interpolations to the text and words placed in Jesus' mouth.

[1143] Important Words

Ναζωραῖος (*Nazoraios*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *an inhabitant of Nazareth; a Nazarene* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1144] The above account is repeated in Matthew 9:27-31/20:29-34 and Mark 10:46-52. However, Matthew's versions of the account (yes he has a doublet) records *two blind men* crying out the same thing, but Mark has the one blind man, which Luke agrees with.

Much later in Jesus' ministry, whilst en route to Jerusalem, Jesus seems to walk past a **blind man** on the road, who after hearing that it is Jesus begins to cry out the Messianic title *son of David!* This eventually gains the attention of Jesus who calls him over, asks him what he wants and then abides by his wishes to heal him. The man immediately receives his sight, like magic. Whether it was an immediate healing is uncertain, but what is certain is that the faith of the man healed him; see under Mark 6:5 for more details. It is possible that the above was a story invented by the author or his source about a spiritually blind man being cured by Jesus.

[1145] The account is mainly about **Zacchaeus**, a chief tax-collector who lived in the city of Jericho. Besides the fact that he was rich, little else is known of him.

[1146] Whilst passing through the city, Jesus' fame spread and many people came out to see him, but due to the small stature of **Zacchaeus**, he was unable to see Jesus. He took the initiative, ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree so that he could at least have a glimpse of Jesus. Whilst passing by, Jesus recognised Zacchaeus' efforts and invited himself to stay in his house, most likely overnight.

[1147] Having chosen to stay overnight at his house, Jesus receives criticism from the crowd, who murmur that he chose to spend the night with a sinner. In reply, Zacchaeus opts to give half of his possessions to the poor and to return any money to anyone he has defrauded fourfold, which results in Jesus vindicating him in verse 9. However, some scholars believe this verse (verse 8) to be an addition to the above story, since it disturbs the sequence of the murmuring of the crowds. Verse 9 follows very closely from verse 7, being a kind of rebuttal to the murmurs. However, as already mentioned, Jesus' reply that today salvation has come into this house may have been triggered by the generosity and repentance of Zacchaeus in verse 8.

[1148] Jesus is now close to Jerusalem and is on his way there, and for that reason many of his disciples and other believers may have thought that going there he would initiate the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. This obviously was the result of a poor interpretation of the Messianic prophecies, since Jesus' kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). However, they were correct in believing that in Jerusalem Jesus' intention may have been to announce that he is the Messiah.

[1149] Luke's version of the parable resembles Matthew's version in 25:14-30 a great deal, see commentary notes under Matthew for details of the parable in general. However, Luke's version also has stark differences, but the end goal of the parable is the same as Matthew's; about vigilance and trying one's utmost to gain God's favour, yet the differences in the account are interesting and many, as will be shown in the analysis below of each verse. To begin with, the rich man in Matthew is now a nobleman in Luke who goes off to receive a kingdom.

[1150]

In Matthew, just three servants were called by the rich man and each was given *ten, five* and *one* talent respectively, whereas in Luke, **ten servants** are called and each given just one pound to trade with.

[1151] This point is completely missing in Matthew; that while going off to receive a kingdom, the nobleman's citizens hate him and send an embassy after him to complain to whoever was giving the kingdom to the nobleman.

[1152] Verses 15-24 resemble the account of Matthew a great deal. However, there is a problem with Luke's version, since only *three servants* come and bring their accounts to their lord, but in verse 13 the lord gives *ten servants* money to trade with. This may in fact be a bit of a blunder on Luke's part, who changes his source text (Q) which Matthew was also using; Luke changed the three servants to ten in verse 13 but forgets to mention the remaining seven above.

[1153] Verse 25 is new; the returned king orders that the pound that was given to this servant be taken away and given over to the one who has ten pounds. To this, the bystanders exclaim that he already has ten pounds!

[1154] The exclamation/complaint of those standing by is ignored by the king, who responds that whoever has, more will be given to him. Thus the one who earned ten pounds deserves even more. Finally, verse 27 addresses those citizens who sent an embassy complaining about the king (verse 14). They are ordered to come before the king, where they will be subsequently executed.

Thus the parable ends with a type of judgement, where people who rebel against the king (who may represent God; see the interpretation under Matthew's account) will be subsequently destroyed. It is clear that both Matthew and Luke are writing down the same tradition and parable, yet how do interpreters explain the differences? Older interpreters often argued that the parables are two completely different ones uttered by Jesus in different times and contexts. This may be a possible interpretation, however, the fact that the parables are so similar argues against such an interpretation. Why would Jesus give almost identical parables twice in his ministry, only a few days or weeks apart? Thus if they were the same account, why all the discrepancies? As already shown above, the account was from the Q source, which both Matthew and Luke had access to; Matthew's version seems to be more original, not containing the errors that Luke's has.

[1155] The above passage is recorded in Mark 11:1-11 and Matthew 21:1-9, for a detailed commentary, see notes under Mark. Luke's account is similar to Mark's, but he makes some interesting changes: To start off with, Luke has the **disciples** of Jesus spread out their garments and cried out '**Hosanna!**' and not the crowds as Mark states. This is probably more accurate, since the majority of the crowds would not have cried Messianic titles only to cry out for his blood a few days later in the trial in front of Pilate.

[1156] Verses 28 to 38 are the same as in Mark. But in Luke, the last few verses are added; after the disciples cry out the praises above, some of the Pharisees complain to Jesus asking him to silence his followers, to which Jesus answers back that if they were not to cry out, the stones would. As explained under Mark, it is very unlikely that the general crowd would have cried out the above, since it would have resulted in Roman arrests of Jesus and the crowd. Thus the disciples of Jesus crying out the above in Luke is probably

more historically correct, along with the reaction of the Pharisees who would have wanted to silence them in case they were heard by any of the Romans as this may have caused trouble for the leading Jews as well.

[1157] This passage is exclusive to Luke and presents a strong contrast to the rejoicing crowd a little earlier. Jesus weeps due to the fact that the city does not know its own fate, which was likely to have been revealed to Jesus. Later, Jesus predicts the Destruction of Jerusalem and in particular the Temple; see [Mark 13:1-2](#) for a fuller explanation.

However, the prediction of the destruction of the Temple above seems slightly out of place; according to Luke this is the first time Jesus enters Jerusalem. Why would he enter it in a triumphal fashion (as in the previous chapter) only to weep at the city and predict its destruction? What has the city done thus far to deserve destruction? It is far more likely that the above saying of Jesus was spoken *after* the crucifixion, whilst he was leaving the city. Looking back at it, he would have wept and predicted its destruction because of its rejection of the Messiah.

[1158] The above passage occurs in all four gospels, but Luke's version is remarkably small in comparison to the other gospels. For a fuller picture of what really happened, see under [Mark 11:15-17](#).

[1159] It was at the Passover festival where the chief priests and leading Jews wished to arrest Jesus by stealth; secretly for fear that some of the people who knew of him may join in with his disciples and seek to protect Jesus and thus cause trouble which may erupt into a riot, which would have caused Roman intervention.

[1160] The above account is from [Mark 11:15-17](#). This is the first clash Jesus has with the authorities in Jerusalem; the question is most likely linked to his overturning of the tables in the Temple. The action of course may have caused the authorities to worry due to the fragile nature of the crowds during the festivals; a small disturbance could lead to riots, which would then lead to bloodshed as the Romans would have come down on the crowds severely.

[1161] Jesus counters their question about his authority to do **these things**. He asks them about their opinion of John the Baptist. Religious authorities generally are the first to oppose prophets of God. To which, John was no exception, as can be seen in both [Matthew \(3:7\)](#) and [Luke \(3:7\)](#) where they (the Pharisees and Sadducees) met the rough side of John and are called *brood of vipers*. Since the priests decide to play safe and not answer Jesus' question, Jesus in turn refuses to answer theirs and successfully evades them.

[1162] Important Words

κύριος (*kurios*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine. See under [Luke 1:43](#) for the meaning of the word.

[1163] Luke's account is actually from [Mark 12:1-12](#). The only difference is that the audience in this account seem to already know the interpretation (see notes under Mark) and exclaim the wish that the Jewish authorities not be destroyed by God, even though in the parable the tenants are very wicked and deserve the devastating punishment that awaits them.

[1164] Luke also adds the above verse; that whoever the corner stone will fall upon will be crushed and whoever falls on it will shatter. But this is omitted from Mark and Matthew; did Jesus speak the above words or not then? And how does the stone relate to Jesus? This makes it difficult to interpret, since Jesus is now a deadly force not to be reckoned with. However, this is not what happened historically, since the Jews arrested Jesus and had him sentenced for execution. Thus, it is unlikely that the stone which is spoken of by Jesus is himself, since he bears little if any resemblance to it.

If the above Lukan version is historically correct, then the saying of Jesus may be a prophecy of the advent of Islam, the corner stone may then point to the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) being it. He does bear a stronger resemblance to the corner stone, in that it was the most important stone, and that whoever did attempt to fight and destroy him, they were utterly humiliated and destroyed in this very life by the Prophet himself.

[1165] The above account is from Mark 12:13-17, see notes under Mark for a commentary of the passage. The main difference between Luke's version is that he is more explicit regarding the **spies'** intentions; that they wished to get Jesus to admit that taxes should not be paid so as to get him into trouble with the Roman authorities.

[1166] The copying of the Gospel of Mark continues, this time from Mark 12:18-27. However, Luke makes two minor additions: the first being in verse 36 where the resurrected people will be like angels and will be sons of God, a title signifying their close relationship with God (for more information on this title, see under Luke 1:32); and the other notable difference is the agreement of some of the scribes with Jesus in verse 39, to whom the Sadducees probably used to ask the very same question.

[1167] Like Matthew 22:41-46, Luke was also using the Gospel of Mark as his source, copying from Mark 12:35-37, but he also agrees with Mark against Matthew by having Jesus complain about the beliefs of the scribes. Other than that, the three accounts are more or less the same.

[1168] Luke's version is almost identical to that of Mark 12:38-40. Jesus continues with his attack on the scribes; this time it is regarding their hypocrisy. Scribes were the professional interpreters of the Law in the Synagogues. They therefore held a position of honour, were respected and thus occasionally dressed in such a way, with long robes. For such a position, they were often given the best seats in congregations. In the market places, wanting to be greeted and recognised also displayed some desire to be honoured.

The scribes are also accused of devouring the houses or wealth of widows. The latter were often seen as the vulnerable members of society in ancient times; having lost their protector, they were often powerless with none to fight their cases. There was limited protection from religious and constitutional Laws. The charge against the scribes may be due to them being made trustees of the widows' properties, and in return they may have demanded a fee, which Jesus may have disapproved of. Or they may have completely mismanaged the properties causing severe financial losses to the widows.

[1169] Luke, continues his copying of Mark's Gospel, this time of 12:41-44. After watching many of the rich putting in much money, a **poor widow** comes along and casts in just two small copper coins. This causes Jesus to summon his disciples and proclaim that she in fact has put in more than the rich people. At the outset this seems unbelievable, since Luke has just said that the rich put in much money while the poor widow cast in just two small coins, but verse 44 explains why: it is due to her putting in **all** her livelihood while the rich put money according to their abundance of wealth. The saying seems to be authentic, since it condones sacrifice in proportion to one's means.

[1170] Mark 13:1-2 is the source of the above passage. After commenting about the poor widow, Jesus leaves the Temple, and whilst doing so is shown by his disciples the splendid buildings, which may indicate that many of the disciples were from the countryside and had little association with urban life. Rather than agreeing and marvelling as well, Jesus turns to them and predicts the destruction of the Temple. The prediction seems to have been fulfilled in 70 CE, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. He states that **'There will not be left here one stone on another'**, pointing to complete destruction.

The above prophecy seems accurate and is likely to have been made by Jesus himself. The fact that the prediction was not exactly fulfilled as suggested by the text shows that it is authentic. The words of Jesus show complete destruction, that no one stone will be left on another, yet when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, much of the Temple walls were left standing; many of the surviving stones are large and weigh between two and five tons, but others, especially the corner stones are much larger. Often

when prophecies are written after the events unfold, i.e. fake prophecies, they often fit the event exactly, which is not the case with the above one made by Jesus, and thus it is most likely to be authentic. E.P. Sanders made a similar point in his book *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 1995, p.257.

[1171] Luke copies from the Gospel of Mark in the above, this time from 13:3-8. See notes under Mark for an explanation.

[1172] The above message is the same as in Mark 13:9-13; Luke may well have been using Mark as his source. See notes under Mark for an explanation. However, verse 18 is an addition to Luke's version, which is a bit awkward: It illustrates that even though the disciples will be delivered up, they will not be harmed, but just two verses earlier in verse 16 Luke states that they will be put to death!

[1173] Both Mark (13:14-20) and Matthew (24:15-22) speak of the above, the former (Mark) being the first to write it. For a detailed commentary, see notes under Mark. Luke's version is different though, he removes all references to *Daniel's desolating sacrilege* and instead speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem.

[1174] Jerusalem will then fall by the sword (of the Romans) and be trampled by the **Gentiles**; they would in turn be carried off as prisoners. But this will only be a trial and disaster until the time when the Gentiles come, i.e. the time when the Church will comprise purely of Gentiles and at that point Luke then discusses the second coming of Jesus which he may have thought to occur in the very near future. It should be noted that Luke was a Gentile Christian himself and thus the final part of this verse is without doubt his own words, placing this 'prophecy' in Jesus' mouth about the coming of Gentiles into the Church.

I suggest readers check Mark and Matthew's version of the above passage and notice that the saying of Jesus about the desolating sacrilege is in the same setting in all three gospels, but Luke's version is completely different from Mark's and Matthew's. It is not possible that Jesus spoke both versions at the same time! This discrepancy is impossible to reconcile; rather it shows that Luke was using the text of Mark, but since he wrote much later than Mark, he interpreted the text of Mark to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, thus he sought to make Jesus' prophecy far more accurate.

[1175] Luke's version of the second coming is remarkably different from that of Mark (13:24-27) and Matthew (24:29-31). The setting is the same, but the saying of Jesus is quite different. Readers are recommended to check notes under Mark for a full explanation.

Heavenly signs will appear, but also worldly, in that the **sea would roar**, resulting in many men **fainting due to fear**. It will be at this point where they will see the **son of man coming**. Jesus then instructs his disciples that when they see this, they are to raise their hands and pray, for at this point they will receive redemption, reminding the reader of the judging role of Jesus when he returns.

The two versions; Mark/Matthew and Luke's version are about the same topic, and in the same context but quite different. Jesus could not have spoken the above two versions at the same time, thus this is another example of how the authors of the gospels were not necessarily inspired by the Holy Spirit, but were simply copying from their sources, chopping and changing them as they saw fit.

[1176] Our author Luke is copying Mark 13:28-32, see notes under Mark for the commentary and the fact that Jesus' prophecy above about his return being imminent was not wholly correct.

Luke does make an interesting change to the text of Mark, uncomfortable with Jesus not knowing when the hour would be (Mark 13:32) Luke omits that verse completely.

[1177]

After instructing his disciples that Jesus will return very shortly in the future, he advises them to be vigilant and alert to when these things happen. He advises against being in error, drunk and concerned over things of this life, as this is no way to prepare for his return.

[1178] Jesus' popularity in Jerusalem seems to have increased since **all the people** around the city came **early in the morning to listen to him**. However, it is rather odd that the same crowds, a day or two later act like a crazed mob all desiring Jesus' blood; see notes under [Luke 23:48](#).

[1179] After Jesus causes trouble in the Temple, he obviously attracts negative attention from the leading authorities who wish to get rid of him. The above is a copy of [Mark 11:18](#).

[1180] Luke's account is from [Mark 14:10-11](#), which is repeated in [Matthew 26:14-16](#). Check under Mark for a detailed reason of why Judas betrayed Jesus. The reason for the betrayal is also different from that of Matthew, instead of it being for money, Judas betrays Jesus from **Satanic** influence.

[1181] The above is from [Mark 14:12-17](#). Just like in The Triumphal Entry ([Mark 11:1-11](#)), where Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey which he sends his disciples to go and fetch for him, he likewise sends two disciples to go into Jerusalem this time and locate a man who will lead them to where he and his disciples will eat the Passover meal. And just like in the Triumphal Entry, it is likely that Jesus had made prior arrangements with a follower who would have agreed to have Jesus eat the Passover meal in his house; Jesus therefore sent his disciples to find this man or his associate who would lead them to the host.

[1182] Luke's account is also similar to [Mark 14:22-25](#), see notes under Mark for a much more detailed explanation of the passage, and how it never happened as above, but was rather the creation of Paul much later.

Additionally, Luke does add a few verses before the breaking of the bread. The **suffering** spoken of in verse 15 would denote the suffering Jesus was to go through before his supposed death. Jesus then seems to promise to never again eat the Passover meal until all is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God; again, referring to his dying on the cross. As will be shown later in this work, both these verses are the words of the author of the gospel and not of Jesus, since the latter never did expect to die on the cross, nor wished to.

[1183] Textual Variant

Most manuscripts read as above, but the Codex Bezae only reads: 'This is my body which is given for you,' omitting the rest of the passage, which was due to the order of the cup-bread-cup: scribes may have got puzzled by such an order and thus sought to rectify it by removing the last reference of 'cup' (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.234).

However, another scholar (Bart Ehrman) has argued that in verse 19 about doing **in remembrance of me** and all of verse 20 were not originally part of Luke's Gospel. He argues that when analysing the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles which the same author wrote, there is no theology about Jesus dying *for the sins of mankind or atonement*. For this author, Jesus does die, but not for the reason most modern Christians think: Jesus dies for the people, which would lead them to repentance, which would lead to salvation. See [Introduction to the Four Gospels](#) at the beginning of this book for more information about the theology of Luke.

Ehrman argues that the above verses which are missing from the Greek manuscript an many Latin ones was not part of Luke's Gospel and was inserted into his gospel by a later

Christian scribe (*The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, 1993, p.198).

Commentary

Luke's version is almost identical to that of Mark 14:22-25 and Matthew 26:26-29, but Luke makes a further interesting addition informing his readers of the purpose of eating and drinking Jesus' blood: it was in **remembrance** of him, which for some reason or another is not recorded in the two earlier gospels. This may be due to the closeness of Luke's Gospel to Paul's, who also records the above in his letter to the Corinthians (see notes under Mark).

[1184] Luke's version of the above is a cut down account of Mark 14:18-21; he omits the silly replies of the disciples (see Mark), but instead mentions them discussing amongst themselves as to who would do it. If Jesus simply informed them that one of them is going to betray him, then it is likely that they would have begun some sort of interrogation with each other, wanting to find out who it was and of course stop him. But as mentioned in the above comment, it is more likely that Judas had left when Jesus informed his disciples, which means the above interrogation in Luke is not historically correct.

[1185] After being told about betrayal amongst themselves the disciples decide it best to have a debate about who is the greatest amongst them. Not only is the timing odd, but also completely omitted by both Mark and Matthew. Both gospels have Jesus prophesy Peter's betrayed and then all proceed over to Gethsemane. In fact, the above debate is recorded by the other two gospels, but much earlier in Jesus' ministry, in Mark it is spoken about in 10:35-45 when Jesus hasn't even entered Jerusalem.

[1186] Jesus again informs them that he came to serve and not to be served; he switches the superiority of the master and slave. He then proudly lets the disciples know that he is happy with them and that they have persisted and stuck with him in his trials, and as such they, too, will receive a kingdom in the hereafter.

One interesting point is that in Mark 10:45, Jesus explicitly speaks about his "death", in that he came to *give his life as a ransom for many*. Matthew copies from Mark as well, and retains this line, but Luke omits it. This actually goes in-line with Luke's theology that Jesus *did not die* for the sins of mankind, but his death brought about repentance, which in turn brings about salvation. See Introduction to the Four Gospels at the beginning of this work for more details.

[1187] The final verse is actually the same as Jesus' saying in Matthew 19:28, which was in a completely different setting. Either Jesus said it twice, or the authors got it mixed up.

[1188] Luke's source for the above is Mark 14:26-31, in which Jesus predicts the abandonment of the disciples. Peter protests and then is told that he too would abandon Jesus after the rooster crows *twice*. In Luke however, there is no reference of the abandonment of other disciples, instead Jesus praises Peter, but then later prophesies his denial.

Did Peter really deny Jesus three times? Was he a coward as portrayed by the gospels? See under Mark 14:53-72 for more details. As will be shown, he was no coward but acted on selfless grounds, with the intention of saving Jesus. The above are likely to be the words of the author Mark whom Luke copied, only wishing to show the cowardliness of Peter and perhaps explaining why the disciples did abandon Jesus.

The other problem is the difference in the prediction of Peter's denial, Luke's version is quite different to Mark's. Perhaps Jesus had two conversations with Peter about his denial? If not, which version is correct?

[1189] This saying of Jesus is not in any of the other gospels. The question is put to the twelve disciples, with reference to his sending them out in 9:1-6. However, the

that his soul is intensely saddened is completely removed from Luke's account. Thus the reader again is left confused as to what to make of what really happened in Gethsemane, since the two versions cannot be reconciled. Mark's account, however, does seem more authentic and original.

[1194] Luke's account of Jesus' arrest is shorter than in Mark (14:43-52) and Matthew (26:47-56), I would recommend readers to read Mark's account first. Luke, however, expands on certain sections: when **kissed** by Judas, Jesus makes the above comment so as to show that it is with the greatest sign of love that Judas betrays him. However, the above contradicts Jesus' question in Matthew, where Jesus asks Judas why he comes to him. Which is it? Jesus could not have said both to Judas. It shows that both Matthew and Luke had access to alternative traditions where Jesus said something different from Judas after receiving a kiss from him.

[1195] Important Words

The WEB translates Jesus' saying as **Let me at least do this**, as if trying to have Jesus asking the soldiers to heal the man. The Greek is ἔατε ἕως τούτου (Eao heos hoyios), and ἔατε is in the 2nd plural form. There is no hint of a first person pronoun ('I' or 'me'). Therefore, it is better translated above, which even the RSV agrees with which has Jesus cry out: "No more of this!"

[1196] Before the soldiers seize Jesus, his disciples ask him whether they should defend him. No answer is given, but since they do, it is likely that Jesus gave them the go-ahead, but then seeing that they were greatly outnumbered he told his disciples to desist and fall back. After permitting his disciples to fight for him, he strangely **heals** the ear of the servant who was injured.

This could be a Lukan creation, since it makes little sense and shows the discomfort of Luke, who wished to correct the violent behaviour of the disciples; Mark and Matthew don't mention it, which they would have gladly included in theirs had it been in their sources. If it really did happen, then it may point to Jesus attempting to minimise the repercussions that he and his disciples might face from the leaders for attacking their soldiers.

[1197] Like Matthew, Luke also omits the reference to the young man fleeing naked, in fact Luke omits the reference to the disciples fleeing as well, perhaps embarrassed by it.

[1198] Again, both Mark and Matthew record the above, 14:53-72 and 26:57-75 respectively. Check Mark's account for a detailed explanation. Luke's account thus far is similar to Mark's, but he changes the structure somewhat: Mark begins with Jesus being taken to the high priest, Peter following on after him, Jesus' interrogation and finally back to Peter's denial. Luke moves on to the story of Peter following after Jesus and the denial right in the beginning, getting it over and done with. Doing so, he in essence contradicts Mark and Matthew who have Peter denying Jesus three times *after* Jesus is interrogated and condemned.

Luke further adds the point that after the cock crows, Jesus turns and looks at Peter, which seems to imply that Jesus was being tried outside, or in a hall from which he could see outside.

[1199] Luke adds the fact that Jesus was being beaten whilst being led to the high priest; even before the interrogation begins, he is beaten and mocked at, told to prophesy etc. This was most likely done by the officers who were leading Jesus; it resembles the behaviour of the Roman soldiers later who revile and beat Jesus as well, but this is after he is condemned.

There is another significant difference in Luke's Gospel; unlike both Mark and Matthew, there is no Sanhedrin gathering at night, but only an interrogation in the morning, the following day.

[1200] During the interrogation, there is no mention of the false witnesses being brought forward by the chief priests as Mark records. And instead of Caiaphas standing up and interrogating Jesus himself, Luke has the whole Sanhedrin interrogate Jesus. They ask him the same question as in Mark, but his reply is not the same in Luke; his reply starts off in similar fashions as the author of Gospel of John, but he ends with the same statement made in Mark's Gospel about the son of man coming in the clouds.

[1201] Whilst Luke omits the discussions of the false witnesses as Mark and Matthew have, he does make an implicit reference to them in verse 71 where the Sanhedrin, rather than Mark's Caiaphas, interrogate Jesus and ask (each other?) what further testimonies are required.

It is difficult to reconcile the numerous discrepancies between Mark/Matthew and Luke's version of the trial; the timing is different along with the actual events occurring during the trial. Christians will argue that there were two councils: one at night (Mark and Matthew) and another in the morning (Luke). However, this is problematic, since Mark and Matthew conclude the council at night with the result being that Jesus is guilty; they beat him and pass sentence. But in Luke, the morning council again resumes with the council asking Jesus the same questions and receiving the same replies, with the result that they condemn him *again* and sentence him. Why do so twice? The similarities between the two accounts are far too similar to separate them. The only answer is that Mark and Luke had different and conflicting traditions which they recorded in their gospels.

[1202] As already explained in the previous chapter, Luke omits any reference to a council being held on the night of Jesus' arrest as Mark and Matthew record. Instead, there is just one council held; that being on the following morning (Luke 22:66). Once they condemn Jesus, they then take him to Pilate.

[1203] It is only in Luke's Gospel where the actual charge is mentioned. Jesus is accused of two crimes: encouraging his followers not to pay the **taxes to Caesar**; and claiming to be the **Christ**. The first accusation is a clear distortion of his previous announcement to pay the taxes (see under [Mark 12:13-17: On Paying Tribute to Caesar](#)), whilst the latter would be quite serious if the accusation was that Jesus intended to declare himself king and revolt against the Romans.

[1204] Pilate is not amazed in Luke's version of the account, instead he sees Jesus to be relatively harmless and goes out to announce the results of his interrogation. However, it is unlikely that Pilate would have declared Jesus innocent if he remained silent and answered none of the accusations made against him. The Markan and Matthean account above indicate his silence and Pilate's astonishment, but someone accused of a crime and then remaining silent in most cases points to them being guilty rather than innocent. Jesus must have explained something to Pilate, for the latter to go out and declare his innocence. The Gospel of John does present a dialogue between Pilate and Jesus, which would in fact have led Pilate to see Jesus as harmless and not a rebel.

[1205] The Lukan narrative continues; the Jews cry out to Pilate that Jesus teaches all over the country, starting from Galilee. Once Pilate hears that he began teaching from **Galilee**, he enquires where Jesus was from and if he was a Galilean. After learning that he was, he thought he could do away with the burden of condemning him and pass the buck over to **Herod**. Luke is unique in discussing the sending of Jesus to Herod Antipas. It may well have occurred historically, but it is difficult to explain why all other gospels omit it.

[1206] This account of sending Jesus to Herod is unique to Luke. According to the above, **Herod** Antipas seemed to be eager to meet Jesus since he had heard a great deal about him and wished to witness one of his miracles, but Jesus gives him the silent treatment as well. Frustrated, Herod Antipas sends Jesus back after mocking him and thereafter for some unknown reason, Pilate and Herod become friends whereas they were not prior to this.

There are some initial difficulties with the above text: whilst in Mark and Matthew, it was Pilate's soldiers who mocked Jesus and dressed him in fancy clothing (see under [Mark 15:15-20](#) and [Matthew 27:27-31](#): Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers); in Luke these soldiers are replaced by Herod's soldiers. This may be due to Luke wishing to please his audience, placing all the blame of Jesus' death and the subsequent mocking of Jesus on the Jews and not the Gentiles.

The other difficulty is the sudden friendship established between Pilate and Herod for some unknown reason. What caused it? And why mention it? It seems that Luke, too, is unaware of why they suddenly established a friendship. An alternative reading and understanding of the text may explain. The one possible reason why they suddenly became friends must be due to Herod doing some sort of favour for Pilate; bringing into being the Roman condition of *amicitia* where friendship was engendered upon some service, usually of a political nature, being rendered. Pilate sends Jesus to Herod and asks a favour; Herod complies and from that time they become friends. So what did Herod do? Jesus was referred to him for judgement, and was acquitted by him. This was what caused the friendship, even though the priests turned up at Herod's residence demanding his condemnation. This implies that Pilate was trying his best to save Jesus; having told the Jews he considered their charges unfounded, he was prevented from releasing him by the implication of Jesus having committed treason against Caesar by claiming to be a king. To find a way out of this predicament, he sent him to Herod, asking the latter, as a favour, to try him and establish his innocence. Even after the chief priests arrived, Herod still refused to condemn him and sent him back to Pilate with a message to that effect.

[1207] After Herod returns Jesus to Pilate, the latter again appeals to the crowd to have Jesus released. He argues that he himself **interrogated** Jesus and found no crime in him; likewise did Herod and he, too, found him innocent of the charges raised against him. But to please the crowds, Pilate will have Jesus punished and chastised in the hope that it would be enough and they would then be content and not ask for Jesus' death any longer. This last part of the passage differs from the other gospels, where Jesus is flogged *after* he is condemned, being part of the crucifixion process (Matthew 27:26).

[1208] Textual Variant

Verse 17 is an addition; it is absent from all early manuscripts (P⁷⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus). It is included in the Received Text and therefore is in the KJV. Scholars believe that it was a later scribal addition, probably borrowing from Mark 15:6 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.237).

[1209] Luke continues from where Pilate declared Jesus innocent. It is the first time **Barabbas** is introduced; the author probably felt it unimportant to introduce the custom, most likely due to him not being able to verify it but only reading it in his source; Mark's Gospel [15:6-14](#).

[1210]

The above story is a condensed version of Mark's Gospel, [15:6-14](#). See notes under Mark for a detailed discussion on this custom and how it is was unlikely to have actually happened.

[1211] Like [Matthew 27:24-26](#), Pilate releases Barabbas and condemns Jesus to crucifixion. However, the author seems to be completely unaware of the hand-washing done by Pilate as reported by Matthew, thus adding further proof that it was the invention of Matthew and not historical. See notes under Matthew for details.

[1212] [Mark 15:21](#) and [Matthew \(27:32\)](#) speak of the soldiers forcing **Simon** to help Jesus. Luke also adds more details to the above Markan account on the Road to Golgotha; he records that following closely behind Jesus was a large number of people who were in grief and were **lamenting** him. If all four gospels are used to aid the reader in understanding what really happened, the reader will no doubt be left rather baffled, since the crowds of Jerusalem seem to be either suffering from some sort of schizophrenia or the gospels are speaking of different crowds in their gospels. A few days prior whilst Jesus was teaching in the Temple, the Jewish elders tried to have Jesus arrested, but they feared the crowds as they thought him to be a prophet (Matthew 21:46). Later in the trial before Pilate the Jewish crowds cry out for his death and now all of a sudden

Jewish crowds are following Jesus bewailing him.

[1213] Jesus turns to the crowd who bewail him and addresses them; some Christians, aware of the inconsistent portrayal of the crowds in the four gospels argue that this crowd consisted not of the earlier Jews at the trial, but rather of Jesus' followers. Yet this cannot be the case, since Jesus is now prophesying *against* them. Jesus gives them a dire warning; that they should not weep for him but for themselves. Often prophets of God act as shields against God's punishment in towns and cities; the condemnation of Jesus will result in him leaving the city, leaving it exposed for Divine punishment. Jesus knows this is what will happen shortly and warns the crowds that they and their children will pay for their crimes. In Jewish culture, the barren women were often seen as cursed, but now those who are barren will be seen as blessed when it comes to the punishment of God upon the city, and many will pray for natural disasters to overcome them in order to escape the punishment.

[1214] Jesus then ends with a proverb, which is difficult to interpret. He likens himself to green or wet wood, which is difficult to ignite; and his enemies to dry wood, which is easy to ignite. The meaning could refer to the Romans; that they treat him as such knowing that he is innocent, so how then will they treat the Jews later whom they will consider to be guilty! Or if the Jews treat Jesus, the innocent Messiah of God like so, how will God treat them who are guilty of attempting to murder Jesus?

[1215] Textual Variant

Codex Alexandrinus, Bezae and the Received Text read as above. Irenaeus, too, mentions the above prayer of Jesus (*Against Heresies* Book 3:348). However, P⁷⁵ and Codex Vaticanus read: *And they cast lots to divide his garments*, omitting what Jesus says completely.

If it was original, then scribes may have removed it thinking/wishing that the destruction of Jerusalem was due to Jesus' suffering and rejection. But if Jesus prays for their forgiveness, God would answer it and do exactly that, forgive them, and thus the destruction of Jerusalem would not have been linked to Jesus at all. On the other hand, many scholars believe the words were added to make Jesus the model for Christian martyrs – of offering forgiveness to one's executioners (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.238).

Commentary

Luke reproduces much of Mark 15:21-27, but adds a further prayer of Jesus, which might have been historical, since prophets of God are often full of compassion. The Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is said to have uttered similar words when he was forced to leave Taif, after the city's children chased him away throwing stones at him. With regards to the above text, it is uncertain to whom Jesus is actually addressing the prayer; the Jews or the Romans? The latter is more likely since just a few verses earlier, Jesus prophesies against the Jews and warns them of the dire consequences of their actions (see previous chapter). This would also be in line with Luke's intentions, to remind his Gentile audience that they, the Romans are not to blame for what happened to Jesus and that they have been forgiven.

[1216] Luke's version differs somewhat from Mark's (15:29-32) and Matthew's (27:39-43). Readers should read those accounts for a fuller picture of what happened and how Jesus fulfils their requests a little later. Luke however, makes a few changes, in that he omits any reference to the passers-by mentioned by the other gospels, but instead has the leaders or rulers of Jerusalem mock him along with the soldiers. The latter taunt him with vinegar as well, perhaps offering and then refusing it or trying to offer it to Jesus knowing he did not want it.

[1217] Textual Variant

The WEB has the criminal refer to Jesus as *Lord* instead of as the above readers. This is how the Received Text reads from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, other

Jewish crowds are following Jesus bewailing him.

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modern Bible editions such as the RSV have the criminal refer to Jesus by name.

[1218] Whilst Mark 15:32 and Matthew 27:44 have both the thieves taunting Jesus, in Luke one of them does so and is rebuked by the other thief. The latter recognises and confesses his guilt and admits that he and the other thief deserve this punishment, but Jesus does not; yet it is unclear how the criminal would know this. Either way, this is another confession of the innocence of Jesus; first the governor, now a condemned criminal and later the centurion will do the same. Jesus seems to recognise the confession and promises the thief that he, too, will be admitted into Paradise.

As noted above, the Lukan account contradicts the Matthean, which states that *both* criminals next to Jesus taunted him, or rather were taunting him, as a continuous past tense action. It is uncertain whether the above happened or not. It may well have, and both Mark and Matthew may be wrong (whilst John seems unaware of it). Yet on the other hand, a confession on one's death bed is not a confession at all, and the thief may well have realised all his errors when face-to-face with death, which Jesus, too, would have known and not accepted, casting doubt on the entire event. The Promised Messiah also doubts the above account, pointing out the 'falsehood' of the Messiah had it happened; he argues that "He (Jesus) promised a certain thief that he would break fast with him in heaven that very day, but, in breach of his promise, he went to hell and stayed there for three days." (*Fountain of Christianity*, 1906, p.19)

One final point worth mentioning; according to most Christians, Jesus was "dead" for three days after his crucifixion. So how can he tell the thief that ***today with me you will be in Paradise***? Some Christians have maintained that Jesus went to hell for three days, so what's going on here? How can Jesus and the thief be in Paradise ***today***? To get over this problem, some Bible translations (New World Translation by Jehovah Witnesses) have inserted a comma to make Jesus say: *And he said to him: "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise."* This is entirely plausible, since ancient Greek manuscripts did not contain any punctuation. However, scholars have given numerous arguments against this way of reading, one of the biggest arguments being the use of the Greek word *today* by the author Luke:

"In Luke's Gospel the word "today" is used some dozen times. In every case it indicates the day on which something significant is happening, often something involving salvation (e.g. 2:11; 4:21; 13:32-33; 19:9). It never, ever indicates simply the day on which something is said to be about to happen. And why would it? Here too, Jesus is saying something important will be happening on that very day: this other man (and Jesus) will soon be in Paradise."
(Bart Ehrman, *Today You Will Be With Me in Paradise?*, Nov 4, 2018, <https://ehrmanblog.org/today-you-will-be-with-me-in-paradise/>).

[1219] Whilst the source of Luke's account seems to be Mark 15:33-39, see notes under Mark for a detailed analysis of the entire event. Luke though, does make a number of changes to the text, abridging it and adding a few other events to the account, as will be shown below.

[1220] Luke seems to interpret the **darkness** over the land as being an eclipse; it is either an eclipse or a supernatural event where God Himself dimmed the sun as a sign of mourning.

[1221] Instead of having Jesus utter the cry of despair as Mark and Matthew do, Luke places a more comfortable and peaceful saying in Jesus' mouth. Some Christians will often argue that this cry of Jesus is the same as mentioned by Mark in 15:37; however, it would make little sense for Jesus to cry out in despair and then suddenly calm himself a few minutes later and say the above in Luke. Furthermore, why does Luke omit the desperate cry in his gospel? According to Luke, there is no cry of desperation, rather Jesus is in full control of the situation.

[1222] Again, Luke seems to modify the text of Mark to have the centurion state that Jesus was **righteous**, or innocent, instead of Mark's proclamation that he was the son of God. The two statements are completely different and cannot be reconciled; often some Christians have argued that they are the same, and they mean the same. However, to declare someone innocent is not the same as calling them the son of God. If after a trial in court, the jury declare someone as not guilty, this is not the same as calling them the son of God!

[1223] Finally, Luke returns to the schizophrenic attitude of the multitude: who accept him as a prophet before his arrest (Matthew 21:46); then cry for his blood and death (Matthew 27:24-26); then lament and mourn whilst he carries his cross to Golgotha (Luke 23:27); then deride him on the cross (Luke 23:37); and finally **beat their breasts** when he is 'dead'.

[1224] Luke's account is also very similar to Mark 15:40-47, see under Mark for an intro of Joseph and how he knew that Jesus was alive. Luke though, does add verse 56 where the women leave the tomb and begin to prepare spices, and rest on the Sabbath day.

[1225] The above is from Mark 16:1-8, see under Mark for a detailed analysis of how the women came to know about Jesus surviving the cross ordeal. Luke's account records the women reaching the tomb, but there is no *earthquake* as reported by Matthew 28:2, or any *guard*; rather they find the stone already rolled away and the tomb empty. Confused they seem to search the tomb, when suddenly they are confronted with **two men** (not *one* as in Mark). Naturally they were startled by the men, but are quickly reassured that they were there only to help.

However, the statements of the men in Luke differ remarkably from those in Mark and Matthew; these two men in Luke seem more angelic, and seem to be aware of the supposed utterances of Jesus when foretelling his passion. See under Mark 8:31-33: Jesus Foretells His Passion for more details on how the supposed prophecies could not have been historical. Based on that, it is safe to assume that the two men/angels above in the Lukan account did not remind the women of the made-up prophecies and that their utterances above are only the invention of the author Luke himself.

[1226] Luke's ending contains more details than those of Mark and Matthew. Whilst in Mark the women *do not obey* the instruction of the man to inform the other disciples; in Matthew the women do obey but the readers are not informed of the reaction of the disciples. In the above the reaction of the disciples is mentioned, and ironically, the eleven disciples chose to ignore the accounts of the women, casting them aside as mere tales. This in turn adds further weight to the argument that the supposed prophecies Jesus made about him being raised were not historical, since had he foretold such an event, they would have recalled and believed the women, but as already argued in Mark 8:31-33, Jesus never did make such a prophecy. It may have been the case that some of the disciples, already feeling depressed and gloomy about what had happened a few days earlier, refused to listen to the women or found it hard to believe.

[1227] Textual Variant

Verse 12 is actually present in a number of early manuscripts such as P⁷⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, but omitted in Codex Bezae and others. Scholars though believe it to be an interpolation from John 20:3-10 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.242). It is omitted in numerous modern Bible translations such as the RSV.

[1228] Important Words

σταδίου (*stadiou*) – Noun, accusative plural, neuter of σταδιον (*stadion*) meaning: a measure of distance, in length around *600 feet, or 200 yard* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical*

Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000).

[1229] After the women leave the tomb and inform the disciples that Jesus has risen, Luke immediately turns his attention to two other disciples who were travelling to Emmaus.

[1230] Whilst en route, Jesus comes and joins them, but they fail to recognise him, thinking him to be an ordinary traveller. It is difficult to interpret this account historically, for there are a number of reasons why the entire account may have been invented by the author Luke himself. To begin with is the strange reason why the two disciples did not recognise their master, whom they were with daily for the past few months at least. The above depiction is that Jesus was miraculously unknown to them as he walked with them, yet this is the only occurrence in the gospels where Jesus is up close and personal with his disciples and they fail to recognise him.

There are a few other appearances of Jesus, and on all occasions the disciples recognise him. Does this imply that he changed form in the above narration, so that the disciples failed to recognise him? Or is it that God prevented them from recognising him, which in turn seems to be a rather pointless exercise? It may be argued by some Christians that the intention was for Jesus to teach them the scriptures, but this is also problematic since what Jesus supposedly teaches them is incorrect! See below for more details.

[1231] This is a disciple of Jesus and is not mentioned anywhere else in the gospels, thus very little information is available on him.

[1232] The account goes on; Jesus joins them and enquires of what they are talking about. They are stunned to realise that he has not heard of the events in Jerusalem, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, the mighty prophet.

[1233] This verse is accurate; it was a common belief amongst the Jews that the Messiah would come and redeem Israel from its enemies (see under [Mark 1:1](#)). However, Jesus does not seem to do this, which in turn may have led some of his disciples to abandon him or at least lose faith in him.

[1234] As already mentioned in [Mark 8:31-33](#), the supposed prophecies made by Jesus about his death and resurrection seem to be fabricated, since even now the disciples seem completely oblivious to the fact that he was to die and rise again.

Very much like John (20:9), this criticism of the disciples for not understanding the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah dying and resurrecting is very unfair, since the Old Testament contains nothing of the sort, nor did any other Jewish group believe in such an absurd concept (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for the beliefs concerning the Messiah in the first century).

[1235] This verse further illustrates the ignorance of the author Luke of the Jewish scriptures, for there is absolutely no mention of the Messiah in the Torah (for a detailed analysis, see under [Mark 1:1](#)). Jesus, being a Jewish expert on the Law would have known this basic fact.

[1236] After breaking the bread (an act which Jesus had done so many times before with the disciples) the disciples recognise him.

[1237] As already shown, the entire episode seems to be the invention of the author Luke, who wished to add further resurrection appearances of Jesus. The first difficulty is the supposed prophecies in the Old Testament placed in the mouth of Jesus, which are grossly inaccurate. Another problem is the possible reason for why Jesus was not

recognisable by his disciples; the mythical elements seem to come out, bringing to light the numerous similarities in the above account with numerous pagan stories of the gods descending from heaven and wandering the lands in disguise.

[1238] This account continues directly from the previous one; this time Jesus appears to the other disciples (Thomas however, is absent). He greets them with *Salaam* or *Shalom* which is used by both Jews and Muslims all over the world. How Jesus suddenly came into their midst is not explained and traditionally it has been viewed as a supernatural event; Jesus manifesting himself out of thin air. However, it is more likely that Jesus simply came in through a back door or was let in by some of his disciples who knew that he had survived.

[1239] The disciples who became terrified would have been those who were ignorant of the plans to save Jesus.

[1240] Naturally, the first thing Jesus does is to explain to them that he has survived the cross and that he is no spirit. He first rebukes them for not believing in the reports of the women ([Luke 24:11](#)) and then to show that he is the same person, he shows them his hands and feet; thus illustrating that he is not a spirit and that he is the very same Jesus, bearing the wounds and scars of the cross.

[1241] Textual Variant

Verse 40 is actually present in a number of early manuscripts such as P⁷⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, but omitted in Codex Bezae and others. Scholars though believe it to be an interpolation from John 20:20 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.243). It is omitted in numerous modern Bible translations such as the RSV.

[1242] After showing himself to the disciples, he then sits down and eats with them. He asks for food, since he was hungry, which again would be rather odd for a supernatural god-like being, who had the power to manifest himself where he wished at will. The natural and most historical approach to the text would be that he was simply hungry and that he was fully human and the same Jesus. If Jesus did have a new body as many Christians may argue, or a resurrected body, why would he ask for food? Later in Luke and Acts it is reported that he was raised to Heaven (Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9) in this same body, which would imply that he is still in need of food even to this day. The only answer to these inconsistencies and difficulties is that Jesus had survived the cross and like any other human, required food and drink.

[1243] After Jesus appears to the disciples a second time, Jesus begins to teach them and remind them of the prophecies he had made regarding himself and how these fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament. However, these cannot be the words of Jesus since he never did prophesy his own death (see notes under [Mark 8:31-33](#)), and the Old Testament contains no prophecy of a dying and resurrecting Messiah (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details).

[1244] Like Matthew, Luke also has a final commission; instructing the disciples to preach to all the nations. However, he makes an interesting addition; the latter part of the verse speaks of the preaching beginning in Jerusalem and then the world. Thus Luke speaks of the order of preaching; first to the Jews and then to the rest of humanity. This concept and idea he inherited from Paul, who also argued that Jesus' mission was first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, and that he himself is fulfilling the latter instruction of Jesus (Acts 13:46, Rom 1:16). As already stated in [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book, the latter was a follower of Paul.

[1245] After Jesus explains to them the scriptures, he then instructs them to **wait in Jerusalem** until they are clothed with some power from God. This in turn is fulfilled in Acts 2:3 where Luke records that the Holy Spirit supposedly descends on the disciples and gives them the power to speak in tongues. They seem to wait for about forty days

according to the second part of Luke's work, Acts of the Apostles, in 1:3-4 where again, our author Luke has Jesus tell them *not to leave Jerusalem until the promise of the Father* comes. However, this causes a problem when we read at the end of the Gospel of Matthew that the disciples leave Jerusalem, going to Galilee (Matthew 28:16). Well, which was it? Did they stay in Jerusalem as Luke states or leave as Matthew states?

[1246] Textual Variant

The majority of manuscripts read as above, including Codex Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, P⁷⁵ and the Received Text; but the Codex Sinaiticus and Bezae read: 'While he blessed them, he parted from them', omitting the rising up into Heaven. Question is, is the end of the verse original to Luke or did a later Christian scribe insert it? If we look at just the manuscripts, then the longer ending (including the ascension) would win, since it is recorded in the earliest manuscripts. But then why would a Christian scribe later on remove the longer ending? All Christians believe that Jesus ascended to heaven, so why remove this?

One famous textual critic argues for the shorter ending; that a later scribe added the part of Jesus' ascension above because the author Luke himself would not have created a contradiction between his first work (Luke) and second (Acts of the Apostles) so quickly. In the above passage, (if we accept the longer reading) then the author is telling us that Jesus ascended to heaven shortly after his "resurrection", but in Acts 1:3 he apparently stayed with his disciples for forty days. The Greek word used above ἀναφέρω (*anaphero*) has never been used by the author Luke (Bart Ehrman, *Does Luke Flat Out Contradict Himself?*, Jun 22, 2018, <https://ehrmanblog.org/does-luke-flat-out-contradict-himself/>).

Therefore, it seems that the final words of the above verse *and was carried up into heaven* were not original and were later added by a Christian scribe. This does not mean that the author Luke did not believe that Jesus ascended to heaven, he did, as he explicitly mentions it in the beginning of his second volume; Acts of the Apostles.

[1247] Important Words

For the translation of προσκυνέω (*proskunew*, pay homage) see the note under Matthew 2:2.

[1248] Textual Variant

Whilst most manuscripts read as above, the Codex Bezae omits the point about them **paying homage** to Jesus. However, since all the other manuscripts contain the extra words this lends strong support to the fact that they were original. Textual critics have explained that the scribe writing the Bezae Codex may have accidentally omitted the words.

[1249] This verse marks the end of the Gospel of Luke.

[1250] Important Words

θεός (*Theos*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *supreme divine being; the true, living and personal God. Also an idol god; the devil as a ruling spirit of this age god; as an adjective, divine (probably JN 1:1b); of persons worthy of reverence and respect such as magistrates and judges* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*).

[1251] Important Words

λογος (*logos*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *computation; reckoning; statement of a theory; argument; rule; principle; law; rule of conduct; verbal expression or utterance; speech; common talk; report; tradition; rumour* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*).

I have followed the word order of the Greek: καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος literally: **And divine was the word**. While most translations of this verse will end with *And the Word was God*, I have opted for the above word order closely following the Greek. According to the meaning of θεός (*theos*) above in the Important Words, preference was made to translate it

as **divine** rather than *God* since the latter does not contain the definite article ('the' in English) and as such would be better interpreted to be **divine** rather than God Himself. This interpretation is not new, as both Philo and Origen believed **the word** to be divine rather than God Himself (De Somn 229f, Origen, Comm, in John 2.2.13-15).

This does not mean that Jesus himself was divine, as will be shown below, the divine word was never originally meant to apply to Jesus, especially in the sense as portrayed by the author of the gospel of John. It is correct that the phrase or title was given to Jesus in with Islamic tradition as mentioned in the Holy Quran:

"When the angels said, 'O Mary, Allah gives thee glad tidings of a word from Him; his name shall be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honoured in this world and in the next, and of those who are granted nearness to God;" (3:46).

However, this does not point to the divinity of Jesus in any way, shape or form. Sadly, some Christian writers have asserted that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not understand the real significant of the word 'kalima' (word).

The word is Arabic; and to say that an Arab of the Holy Prophet's knowledge and intelligence did not know the meaning or significance of this word is simply absurd. It is a fact that neither the Holy Prophet nor any of his followers ever attached any extraordinary significance to this title, which might exalt Jesus over the rest of humanity. Many millions of Christians in the past have converted to Islam, yet we do not have any references in any works objecting to the use of the word. Nor do we have any works of ex-Muslims converting to Christianity due to the use of this word.

The great lexicographer, the author of *Taj al-Arus*, says that Jesus has been called *Kalimat Allah* because his words were helpful to the cause of religion. Just as a person who helps the cause of religion by his valour is called *Saif Allah* (the sword of Allah) or *Asad Allah* (the lion of Allah), so is the expression *Kalimat Allah*. According to the same authority, Jesus was called *Kalimat Allah* also because his birth did not take place through the agency of a male parent but by the direct 'command' of God (19: 21, 22)

Besides the literal meanings given, the Quran has used this word in the following verses: (1) 'a sign' as in 66:13 and 8:8. (2) 'punishment' as in 10:97. (3) 'plan' or 'design' as in 9:40. (4) 'glad tidings' as in 7:138. (5) 'a mere word of mouth' or 'a mere assertion' as in 23:10. Taken in any of the above senses, the word Kalima in no way gives Jesus a status higher than that of other Prophets.

Again, if Jesus has been called *Kalima* (word) in the Quran, the Holy Prophet has been called *dhikr* i.e. a book or a good speech (65:11, 12), which evidently consists of many kalimas (words). (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.394-395)

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) elaborates further, describing the status of *Kalimatullah* (Word of Allah). He writes:

"When love of Allah, the Exalted, leads a man progressively towards truth and righteousness and he gives up his selfish and carnal desires, he reaches the ultimate stage of the purification of his soul. This is when he comes out of the dark abyss of his ego and its passions; and his body, which is the throne of the soul, is fully cleansed of all carnal dust and smoke and he becomes like a drop of crystal clear water. At this stage, in the sight of Allah, he is the pure soul that has emerged after the carnal self has melted away, and has, in complete obedience to his Lord, acquired a resemblance with the angels. It is at this stage that he deserves to be called Ruhullah or Kalimatullah." (*Heavenly Signs*, 2005, p.19)

[1252] The beginning of John's Gospel is remarkably different from the other gospels: there are no birth narratives in John's Gospel as in Matthew and Luke; rather, John introduces Jesus as the **word** immediately wishing his readers to know that Jesus was there with God right from the beginning. I.e. Jesus is eternal in John's Gospel, an idea

absent from the Synoptic gospels (first three gospels). In John's Gospel Jesus is the creator of the universe (verse 3), again an idea absent in the Synoptic gospels. It is rather puzzling that if Jesus was all this, why do the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke not bother mentioning it? Why don't the sources of the gospels not even mention it? Like Q, M (a source for Matthew) or L (a source for Luke)? This simply proves the evolved state of the Gospel of John; that it was written much later than the other gospels and at a time when the divinity of Jesus was firmly established, unlike the other gospels.

With regards to the overall Prologue; many scholars identify it as a poem which was formed by the community of our author John (Raymond E Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible series, vol 1, p.22), It is very difficult to provide a historical critical interpretation of the above verses, since according to the author, Jesus' story or life does not begin with the virgin birth as Matthew and Luke believe it to be, but rather from the beginning of time. Readers should note that the author of John's Gospel was heavily influenced by Paul's writings and by the time he had written his gospel (some seventy odd years after the cross ordeal), the divinity of Jesus had become widespread and was part of the faith of the majority of Christians.

The first section of the poem (verses 1-13) seems to be modelled on the creation story in Chapter 1 of Genesis. Both accounts begin with **In the beginning**, and proceed to actions of creation, yet the Johannine version has one significant difference when compared to the Genesis account: that being the **logos** or **word**, which is the focal point of the poem; he is with God in the beginning, everything comes into being through him etc. This in turn is rather shocking to the Jewish reader, since the logos or word is not mentioned at all in the Genesis account, as if the author of Genesis was unaware of it, which naturally poses the question of whether God revealed the Genesis creation story or not? If so, why was possibly the most important aspect (the logos/word) not mentioned? The only possible answer is that the above Johannine account is not historical and that it is simply a poem recited by some later Christians, since it contradicts the revelation of God in the Torah.

Some Christians have argued that the Genesis account does speak of God(s) in the plural; the argument goes that the noun used for God in Genesis 1 is אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*) is in the plural number, and so refers to the Triune God of the Christians (Nabeel Qureshi, *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?*, 2016, p. 59-60): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. However, this is a weak interpretation and displays ignorance of the Hebrew language, or Semitic languages for that matter. The plurality of the word is often referred to as the *royal we* or the *majestic plural* and is used numerous times in the Old Testament, e.g. Isa 19:4 which reads: "...and I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard *master*; and a fierce king will rule over them, says the Lord, the LORD of hosts." The word *master* is in fact in the plural number yet is read as a singular noun. Likewise, in the Genesis story, God (Elohim) is in the plural but is read and understood as a singular noun, for whenever Elohim is spoken of in the same chapter, the masculine singular pronoun 'he' is used (verse 27: "So God created man in *his* own image, in the image of God *he* created him; male and female *he* created them").

Some recent scholars have argued that such a concept of the *royal we* was not used at the time when the Torah accounts were written, however, these same scholars do not interpret the word *Elohim* as signifying the Trinity, but rather interpret the plurality as God addressing and working his Divine council, which comprised of angels and other spiritual creatures. The fact that the singular pronoun *he* is used as explained above rules out any form or Trinity.

Finally, there is another possible interpretation for the above; the **word** or **logos** can be understood and translated as **utterance** as shown under Important Words above. Thus the verses could be understood as follows:

In the beginning was the *utterance*, and the *utterance* was with God, and divine was the *utterance*.

The *utterance* was in the beginning with God.

Everything became through the *utterance*, and apart from the *utterance* nothing was becoming, which has become.

In the *utterance* was life, and the life was the light of men

This in turn goes in line with the Genesis account where God *says*: “Let there be light... Let there be a firmament...” The utterance of speech from God was what created the world and everything in it. It was with God and through it everything came into being. However, this translation/interpretation does not go in line with verse 14 below where the word becomes flesh and dwells with the people. For in that verse, the word would clearly refer to Jesus according to the author. But as explained under verse 14, it is likely that the statement was the invention of the author himself who wished to convince his readers that Jesus is the word.

[1253] This verse can be seen and interpreted again in light of the creation story in Genesis 1; the predominant aspect being that God created life, which was the greatest gift to man. But later in the creation story, darkness made an attempt on the light; Satan sought to overcome Adam’s life by offering him the fruit and have him disobey God. It may be worth noting that according to the biblical account, Adam sinned and was removed from the Garden of Eden, yet Adam still maintained a relationship with God and thus light overcame the darkness after an initial hiccup.

[1254] It may be worthwhile noting another similar document to the first few verses of John’s Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Law, and the Law was with God, and the Law was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and with Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not” (*The Essene Gospel of John*, Translated by Edmond Szekely and Purcell Weaver, published by The C.W Daniel Company in 2003).

The above quote is from the gospel which Edmond Bordeaux Szekely translated from unknown manuscripts found in the Vatican Archives. It is similar to the opening of the Gospel of John, and could have perhaps been the hymn or poem which John copied in his gospel, but modified to match his beliefs. Instead of the Law (Torah Law) which existed from the beginning, the word (Jesus) existed from the beginning etc.

[1255] In between the first poem, the author moves away from discussing the word, and introduces John the Baptist. Some scholars believe that this was the original beginning of the source text of John, who then sandwiched it with the poem about the **word**. For verse 6, **a man sent from God...** is a typical introduction to a narrative. He comes to bear witness to the light, but he himself was not the light, a fact made explicit by the author who probably had the disciples of John the Baptist in mind; some scholars believing that verse 8 was a polemical rebuttal to any views that John was the Messiah during the writing of John’s Gospel. Verse 9 ends John’s involvement in the poem; bringing the reader back to the word.

[1256] Verses 10-12 are often seen to be a summary of the earthly Jesus’ life according to John’s Gospel. Verse 10 speaks of Jesus coming into the **world**, repeated explicitly in 12:46, but the **world did not know him**; again repeated in 14:7 and 16:3. In verse 11 Jesus comes to his people but is rejected, as explicitly stated in 4:44 and 12:37. But those who did **receive him** (verse 12), those that **believed** in his **name** and his claim, those became **children of God**, just like Jesus was a child/son of God.

[1257] Those who believe in Jesus, the children of God; these are they who have conquered the **desires of the flesh**. The concept is one of the key points and tenants of the Islamic faith as well; the idea and aim of disciplining the soul. The untamed soul is described in Islam as the *soul which incites to evil*; it is the instinctive “...characteristic of the human self that it incites man to evil and is opposed to his attainment of perfection and to his moral state, and urges him towards undesirable and evil ways.” (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p.1). After prophet Joseph is tempted by Potiphar’s wife, he admits to the King:

“And I do not free myself *from blame*, surely the soul incites to evil except when my Lord shows mercy. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.” (Holy Quran 12:54).

Once one is able to tame the soul, through discipline and spiritual exercise it grows enfeebled and gives way to the *self-reproving soul*, in which the believer is able to control the soul to a certain degree, but at times will be overcome by its enjoining to evil, or is able to resist its temptations and in turn reproves the soul for enticing him/her to pointless passions:

“At this stage man ceases to resemble the animals. Calling it to witness is for the purpose of doing it honour, as if by advancing from the state of the self that is prone to evil and arriving at the state of the reproving self, it has become worthy of honour in divine estimation. It is so called as it reproves man on vice and is not reconciled to man’s submitting to his natural desires and leading an unbridled existence like the animals.” (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p.2).

After much labour, constant prayer and immense will-power the *soul at peace* is established, where the soul and the believer become one in the end, with regards to their aims and goals. No longer does the soul incite to evil but only to good, in accordance to the wishes of the believer.

“This is the stage when the soul of a person being delivered from all weaknesses is filled with spiritual powers and establishes a relationship with God Almighty without Whose support it cannot exist. As water flowing down from a height, on account of its volume and the absence of any obstruction, rushes with great force, in the same way the soul at rest flows towards God... It undergoes a great transformation in this very life and is bestowed a paradise while still in this world” (Ibid, p.3).

The above illustrates the development of the concept of controlling one’s desires; in John’s text above it is about controlling the desires of the flesh, while the Islamic perspective is that of controlling the lower soul’s desires. In essence both are speaking of the same thing and the end goal is the same.

[1258] Our author John, in the above, writes that it is Jesus who was the **word** which **became flesh**; he is the one who is **born from the Father**. However, a little later in verse 45 of the same chapter, Philip speaks to his brother and informs him that Jesus is the son of Joseph. The author of the gospel does not correct Philip, nor does he notice the apparent contradiction. It looks as though he simply copied his sources and modified them by adding Jesus in the above poem without much overall thought and consistency. The concept of Jesus becoming flesh and coming into the world seems also to have been borrowed from Paul: “For what the Law was unable to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own son in the form of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned Sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3). It should be noted that Paul wrote his letters before the gospels were compiled, and therefore the gospel writers were influenced by him.

[1259] In verses 15 and 16, the author returns to the role of **John** the Baptist. Again, the verses look highly polemical and seem to be a rebuttal against any claim that John was superior to Jesus due to him coming first. The author here is making it clear that the *only* reason John came was to **bear witness** to the truth of Jesus.

[1260] Textual Variant

While manuscripts P⁶⁶, P⁷⁵ and Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus all read as above, very late ones including the Received Text from which the KJV version is replace **God** with **son**: *No one has seen God at any time. The only son, the one being in his father’s bosom...* The reading above is considered stronger due to manuscript evidence and is no doubt the preferred reading (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.248).

[1261]

Verses 17 and 18 end the Prologue. The Torah **Law** came through **Moses** and the Prophets, but is no longer applicable in the author’s time, rather it is the time of God’s **grace**, an idea already known to originate again from Paul: “Through whom we received grace and apostleship, into obedience of faith in all the nations for his name’s *sake*” (Rom 1:5).

The author John is now contrasting the status and relationship between Moses and God, and Jesus and God. The former was not able to see God totally or properly (Ex 33:18), while the latter is actually born of God and by His side and thus has clearly seen God. Again, it should be noted that these are the words and views of the author who was heavily influenced by Paul, who in turn disliked the Mosaic Law. With that in mind, it comes as no surprise that such a contrast is made by John who lowers the status of Moses and elevates Jesus.

[1262] Like the author Mark, John also omits the birth narratives of Jesus and moves onto the account of John the Baptist immediately after the Prologue. His introduction is completely different to the other gospels though. In John's Gospel, **John** the Baptist is challenged by the **priests** and **Levites** from Jerusalem, as to whom he is and why he is baptising.

[1263] Rather than answering their question directly, John the Baptist seems to deny that he is the Christ without them even asking if he was. Perhaps they did and the author omitted it, or it may be the words of the author who wishes to ensure that his readers are certain that John is not the Christ.

[1264] Priests came from Jerusalem to ask who John the Baptist was. He first denies being the Christ, he is then asked if he is the prophet Elijah, which he denies. This seems odd, since later in Matthew's Gospel, the reader is informed that he is Elijah (17:12-13). This may be due to the fact that John had not yet been given the status of Elijah when they enquired.

Next, the Jews ask if John is claiming to be **The Prophet**. What can be certain from the above is that the Jews awaited three separate persons or roles, Elijah, the Messiah and **The Prophet**. The definite article before prophet makes this figure the prophet par excellence: there were many prophets in the world, but just one prophet worthy of being referred to as **The Prophet**.

As regards the awaiting of the Messiah (see under Mark 1:1), what of The Prophet? **The Prophet** was to be different from the Messiah; there were two distinct figures to come, even the Dead Sea Scrolls discuss 'the coming of *the prophet* and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel' (1QA 9:11). H.Braun also concludes with the above conclusion in his study on the above verse and Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran und dat NT, 196-202).

Reference to this prophet is made in Deuteronomy 18:18-20:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die."

The following points can be derived from the above prophecy: 1) The prophet was to be similar to Moses; 2) He will be among the *brethren* of the Israelites; 3) God himself will speak words to the prophet who will in turn relate them back to the people; and 4) Whoever lies about receiving a revelation from God, that person will die.

Most Christians will argue that the prophecy was about Jesus, how did Jesus fulfil all of the criteria? He is not very similar to Moses, and according to the Christians, Jesus is unique, the divine son of God, sinless and perfect, thus without doubt none can be like him. He does fulfil the second criterion, but the third point about God putting words in his mouth and him relaying it to the people is not entirely suitable for the son of God, as the gospels contain few words from God the Father Himself. The Christian Jesus does however fulfil the final criterion; he was put to death! Therefore if the above is true, then (God forbid) Jesus was a liar and was punished for fabricating a revelation. This point

itself completely rules out the Christian Jesus being the prophet.

Furthermore, a verse in the Torah itself attests to the fact that no one was like Moses: "And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut 34:10). It should be noted that the above is written in the Torah, which is said to be written by Moses himself; however, this verse was written after Moses' death. Amongst the Israelites, Moses was possibly considered to be the first prophet (if Joseph is excluded). If Moses was the first prophet, what purpose was there in stating immediately after his death, there has not risen any prophet like him afterwards? Thus the above may be referred to as a prophecy, that there will be no prophet *in Israel* who will be like Moses. If this be the case, this, too, rules out Jesus, since he is amongst the Israelites and therefore cannot be like Moses.

On the other hand, another personality fulfils the above very well; the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of Islam. Analysing each point:

1) Both prophets had normal births. Both had wives and children. Both had revelations which were written down. Both had introduced a new Law in their teachings. Both became accepted Leaders of their respective tribes/people.

2) *Brethren* in Hebrew is אָח (Ahgh) meaning: *brother; born of same mother (and father). Also of half-brother, (Gen 20:5); A Relative (Gen 13:8)* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

The noun itself has been used in varying contexts in the Old Testament: at times it was used for relatives, e.g.in Gen 20:5 regarding Abraham and his wife Sarah: "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister?' And she herself said, 'He is my *brother* (Ahgh).'" Gen 13:8 reads: "Then Abram said to Lot, 'Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are kinsmen (Ahgh).'"

Both the above instances are prior to the coming of Moses and the Israelites. Later in the book of Numbers, Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: "Thus says your brother (Ahgh) Israel: You know all the adversity that has befallen us..." (20:14). The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Israel (Gen 36:43). Thus they were neither Jews, nor Israelites. Again, the Edomites are referred to as brothers by Moses in Deut 23:7: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother (Ahgh); you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land."

Thus from a Lexical point of view, *brethren* has a much broader meaning than *an Israelite*. It would encompass the Edomites, and the half brothers of the Israelites; and the Ishmaelites, from whom the Holy Prophet of Islam was descended.

However, even after the above, some Christians have attempted to argue that *brethren* must be an Israelite and therefore could not have been the Prophet of Islam; this is done by quoting Deuteronomy 17:15 from the NIV translation of the Bible where it discusses the appointment of a King over the people of Israel: "Be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother *Israelite*."

The key word above is in italics; that the king who was to govern Israel must be a brother *Israelite*. Thus all brothers of Israelites were and can only be fellow Israelites. Initially, the argument is convincing, however when reading the same passage in the RSV Bible, it reads: "You may indeed set as king over you him whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother."

The final word *Israelite* is dropped from the translation, which in fact is in accordance with the Hebrew. The verse ends with אָח (Ahgh), highlighting the serious mistranslation (intentionally?) by the NIV translators.

3) The Holy Prophet claimed to have received a direct revelation from God. This was then written verbatim and now comprises the Holy Quran.

4) The Prophet of Islam died a natural death at the age of sixty-two in Medina. Thus if (God forbid) he was a liar, God would have had him put to death as verse 20 mentions. But he proved to be a true Prophet of God.

To conclude, the *Prophet like Moses* mentioned in the Old Testament would not be Jesus but rather the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

[1265] After refusing to be any of the three awaited figures, John the Baptist explains his true purpose; his mission is like that of the other gospels, he is the prophet calling in the wilderness.

[1266] After John denies being the three persons mentioned above, members of the crowd or Pharisees naturally ask why he is baptising if he is not any of the three awaited figures. What gives him the right to do so etc.?

[1267]

John's reply does not really answer the question, instead he simply asserts that one mightier than him is to come whom he is not worthy to even untie the straps of his shoes. It seems that according to the Gospel of John, the mission and sole purpose of John the Baptist's coming is to point out that the Messiah is to come and to identify him. Besides that, he does not do much else.

Readers should read about John's Messianic preaching in the others gospels as well ([Mark 1:7-8](#), [Matthew 3:11-12](#) and [Luke 3:15-18](#)). The Matthew and Luke version are quite similar, but Mark has John saying something completely different, as does our current author John.

[1268] Important Words

Many scholars have argued that the source of John's Gospel above got things confused and mistranslated the Hebrew *talya* which means both *lamb* and *servant*. Thus, if John did cry out: 'The *talya* of God' he most likely meant the servant of God, not the lamb of God. However, John's source got it wrong and so does John, who has John the Baptist cry out as above (Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible series, vol 1, p.61).

[1269] The author, John, differs remarkably from the other gospels: he first removes any reference of Jesus being baptised by John and instead the latter sees Jesus and cries out **The Lamb of God!** This title is only used in the current gospel and is absent in the others. By giving Jesus this title, the author is equating Jesus with the Passover lamb sacrificed by the Jews every year. The author, John, may well have had in mind the Isaiah text when he wrote the above: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a **lamb** that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). For a detailed interpretation of the Isaiah passages see under [Matt 8:17](#).

However, there are numerous difficulties with the idea that Jesus is the lamb which takes the sin away from the world. Which lamb is the author, John, referring to? Could it be the one in Leviticus 16:7 which speaks of a scapegoat which takes the sins of the people? Yet this is problematic for two reasons: 1) it is a goat and not a lamb; and 2) the scapegoat is not sacrificed, rather it bears the sins of the people and is *released* into the wilderness (Lev 16:10, 22). However, if it is the paschal lamb, which was killed and not sacrificed, and its blood placed on the doorposts of the Israelites in the final dreadful sign of Moses (the killing of the firstborn), then this, too, does not fit the picture, since the blood of this lamb did not atone for any sins, rather it served the purpose of identifying the occupants of the house, thus causing the Angel of Death to pass over.

Some Christians have argued that the reference to the lamb is an eschatological (end of days) concept commonly held by the Jews of the first century, that they expected the coming of a *lamb* (metaphorical) in the end of days, which is synonymous with the Messiah. The reference is in a document known as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, written around 250 BCE, but this work has been heavily interpolated by later Christians (Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism*, 1995, p.247). In the Testament of Joseph, it speaks of a *virgin* born in Judah and from her a *spotless lamb* will come. This lamb will trample all its enemies underfoot and then save all the nations and Israel. However, the majority of scholars, if not all, are in agreement that the passage is a Christian interpolation and is very clearly based upon the Johannine text above.

For all the above reasons, it can be safe to assume that the cry of John the Baptist in the above text is not historical and would either be the invention of the author himself, or that he or his source translated the Hebrew incorrectly as stated in the Important Words section.

With regards to the *concept of atonement*; the idea and belief of the majority of Christians is that Jesus came to the world to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice in order to take on the sins of mankind. This viewpoint is categorically rejected by the Holy Quran, which speaks of Jesus as a prophet of God, sent to preach to the children of Israel:

“And We sent in their footsteps Jesus son of Mary, confirming what came before him in the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light, confirming what came before him in the Torah, and a guidance and admonition for the pious” (5: 48).

The concept itself first comes to light in the writings of Paul: As mentioned in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, the letters of Paul were written many years *before* the gospels, which in turn were influenced by Paul’s work. While the concept of atonement is relatively central to Paul’s ideology, it is scarcely mentioned in the gospels.

Beginning with Mark, he speaks of it explicitly twice: “For the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many.” (Mark 10: 45); “And he spoke to them: ‘This is my blood of the covenant, being poured out for many.’” (Mark 14: 24) The author of this gospel was a follower of Paul and was influenced heavily by him and thus speaks of the concept more than the other Synoptic (first three) gospels.

With regards to Matthew, there is one implicit reference in Matthew 1:21: “She will bear a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” And one further explicit reference which was copied from Mark: “For this is my blood of the covenant, being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26: 28) This is no doubt a reference back to Matthew 1:21 where Jesus is spoken of as saving people from their sins.

In Luke’s Gospel, there are *no explicit references to Jesus’s atonement*. This lack of references can be observed to the point where the author modifies the text of his source (Mark) to remove any reference of Jesus’ atonement; e.g. both Mark and Matthew speak of Jesus’ atonement in the last supper, however Luke modifies this to: “And likewise the cup after supper, saying: ‘This cup, the new covenant in my blood, is poured out for you’” (Luke 22:20). This is surprising since Luke too, was a staunch follower of Paul. However, there are ample references of Jesus being the Saviour, which may imply that he is the Saviour in the form of saving people’s sins. However, a more accurate interpretation would be his saving people from their enemies. This is implied in the response of those being saved: to be rescued out of the hand of those hating us *and* pay homage to Him fearlessly, in piety and righteousness in front of Him in all of our days. (Luke 1:74-75)

Furthermore, there are instances in Luke’s Gospel which actually *go against* the concept of atonement: The Parable of the Prodigal Son and The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 15:11-32 and Luke 16:19-31 respectively). Luke or his source shows no knowledge of the concept.

When it comes to the fourth gospel, which is often referred to as a Super Pauline gospel, it is no surprise that there are numerous explicit references of Jesus atoning for the sins of mankind. The idea is introduced very early in the gospel: **The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).** Throughout this gospel Jesus is modelled on the Passover lamb, to the point of even ‘dying’ on the cross on the same day in which the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed.

Further references include John 15: 13: “Greater love than this no one has, that someone may lay down his life for his friends.” which may refer to Jesus’ atonement. Refer to the notes under that verse for a fuller explanation. Finally, the author goes as far as even placing the concept in the mouth of Jesus’ enemy Caiaphas: “And he did not speak this of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was to die for the nation.” (John 11:51)

The concept of Atonement is completely alien to Islam, the path of salvation being a combination of both *faith* and *good works*. However, there is a form of atonement in Judaism, in Leviticus 16:21, the High Priest would place his hands on a goat and ‘put’ all the sins of the people onto the goat (the scape-goat). This goat was then released into the wilderness. This was the only sacrifice in which sins were transferred, or where an animal took the sins of the people. It is important to point out that, all other sacrifices, including blood sacrifices, did not perform this function; that of bearing the sins of the sinner. For more details on sacrifice, see under [Mark 11:15](#).

Some Christians will often quote Leviticus 17:11 to support the concept that blood is required for the atonement of sins: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life.” But the context of the above instruction is regarding the eating and drinking of blood, particularly by pagans, it is this that God is forbidding. Blood was not an essential requirement for sin offerings; if one was not able to afford an animal for their sin offering, then they were able to offer fine flour (Leviticus 5:11) instead.

Furthermore, there are numerous instances in the Old Testament where God *does forgive* the sins of people *without* any blood sacrifices or any sacrifices for that matter, the example of the people of Nineveh is very clear in Jonah 3:10. In-fact, blood sacrifices almost ceased to exist for the vast majority of Jews once the first Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. Most of the Jews did not return to Jerusalem even after the Temple was rebuilt, and thus were not concerned with any blood being spilt for their sins, since they knew that God has set other methods of forgiving sins.

If, therefore the concept of atonement did not originate from Judaism, where did it come from? The answer possibly lies with Paul and the pagans who converted to Christianity, who brought in their own customs and traditions of Christianity.

There are serious theological problems with the Atonement theory as well, Stephen Finlan highlights major issues and questions; e.g. why was this intercession necessary? Why is Jesus pleading for humanity only to be accepted after he is murdered? Why couldn’t the intercession be effective without him being tortured and killed like the example in Islam, where the Prophet and many others will intercede on behalf of the damned? We are basically forced to think of Jesus as heroic and god the father as sadistic.

Stephen highlights the fact that such an act calls God’s free will, justice and sanity into question:

- Free will: Was God unable to forgive until such a brutal ritual was fulfilled?
- Justice: What kind of judge makes pardon conditional upon a new crime being committed? Is God a corrupt judge, whose pardon can only be purchased through a bloody ritual?
- Sanity: How could a loving father, as Jesus taught on numerous occasions, require a ritual killing? Is he loving and caring half the time, only then to require torture and blood the rest of the time? Take the example of Matthew 7:9-11 where Jesus explains that the heavenly father knows everything the people need and that he will

provide for them? We are sure that Jesus did not even consider and think of a horrific torturous death while saying so. (Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 1999, p.98).

In fact, as is argued under [Mark 11:15](#), the concept of sacrifice was most likely not Divinely ordained, but was more likely to have been borrowed from the pagans living in and around the Jews.

[1270] It seems that John the Baptist has become the vehicle for the author to profess the latter's views. It is difficult to imagine John professing his worthlessness and simply preaching the one message; that of the coming of Jesus. The portrayal is drastically different when compared with the previous three gospels. Furthermore, there would be no purpose for him having disciples if that was his sole mission, since they would simply listen to him and follow Jesus instead.

There are other problems with the verse: if the sole purpose of John was to identify the Messiah as indicated above, then one would expect John to stop baptising and simply proclaim the arrival of the Messiah, yet for some reason he continues baptising (John 3:23). The above simply illustrates that the words are those of the author of the gospel and not John the Baptist's.

[1271] In this verse, John bears testimony to the vision he sees, which is somewhat similar to [Matthew 3:16](#), but the voice from Heaven is omitted.

[1272] John the Baptist repeats himself here; often the repetition of a saying will arouse the suspicion that someone has inserted something into the text or made some sort of addition. But again, reference is made to the Holy Spirit by John, yet he seems to have forgotten to teach his disciples about the Holy Spirit according to the Book of Acts (Ch. 19), thus further proving the case that the above words are those of the author.

[1273] Textual Variant

The above reading is most likely the original wording of the verse according to the earliest manuscripts (P⁵, P¹⁰⁶, Codex Sinaiticus). A variant reading ends with *the son of God* which is from other manuscripts (P⁶⁶, P⁷⁵, P¹²⁰ and Codex Vaticanus and Alexandrinus) and thus is recorded in the Received Text from which the KJV is based upon. Scholars argues that the title **chosen one of God** is more unusual and therefore could be the one John originally wrote, which was then changed to the more usual title *son of God*. However, the scholars argue that, we cannot be certain in light of the documentary evidence. Therefore, this is a case where either reading could be original (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.249).

Commentary

This verse ends the dialogue. It is not clear who exactly John the Baptist is addressing in the above text; it would not have been the priests and Levites mentioned earlier, since verse 28 ends that scene. It cannot be the disciples of John either, since in verse 36 the words of John are repeated and the disciples leave him immediately and follow Jesus. Thus there is just one option remaining: John the Baptist is addressing the readers of the gospel.

[1274] See under [John 1:29](#) for the meaning of this phrase.

[1275] After John the Baptist addresses the readers of the gospel in 1:34, the author then moves to the next day to introduce the first disciples of Jesus. The account is completely different from that of the other gospels where John the Baptist *does not meet or see* Jesus again after the baptism, but here he is shown to have two disciples and

after seeing Jesus cries out, 'The Lamb of God!'

The two disciples abandon their former master to follow Jesus instead. They refer to Jesus as **Rabbi**, a title which is mentioned only twice in the other three gospels. The author had to translate the word, perhaps for his Gentile audience. Geza Vermes is of the opinion that the term *Rabbi* being used for Jesus is questionable since the great masters who lived in and around the time of Jesus; Hillel, Shammai and Gamaliel were all called *elders* and not *Rabbis* (*The Changing Faces of Jesus*, 2000, p.26). The disciples begin to follow Jesus resulting in him asking what they want/seek. They ask him where he is staying and from that Jesus understands that they wish to become his disciples. It was the **tenth hour**, meaning around 4pm.

[1276] Important Words

Πέτρος (*Petros*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning: *stone or rock* (Friberg, Miller, Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, 2000). I have opted to actually translate the Greek word into English, rather than provide the transliteration (Peter) as the RSV has done.

Commentary

Andrew is introduced here as one of the disciples of John the Baptist who then follows Jesus. He was the brother of **Simon Peter**. This is the same Andrew mentioned in the Synoptic (first three) gospels who is invited by Jesus himself to follow him while the former is fishing. However, in John's Gospel, he is not fishing, but is with John the Baptist whom he then leaves and follows Jesus. After learning about Jesus, he then returns to his home and calls his brother Simon, who in turn meets Jesus and is named Cephas or Peter.

There are a number of problems with the above account. According to this gospel, the sole purpose of John the Baptist is to identify the Messiah, but even after he does so above, he still continues baptising people (3:32). Surely, he would have stopped and have simply instructed people that the Messiah had come and to follow him. Further problems occur when even after Jesus is condemned and tried in Jerusalem, John the Baptist still retains some disciples (Acts 19). Again, if the sole purpose of John was to identify the Messiah, what was the need of him having disciples?

The problems do not end there; although John the Baptist seems to identify the Messiah in the beginning of his ministry in John's Gospel, in the other gospels, during the end of his life and whilst he is in prison, he sends his disciples to Jesus to ask whether he is the Messiah or not; see notes under [Matthew 11:1-6](#). Thus with all these difficulties with the above text, it is highly unlikely to have actually occurred as mentioned, and must be the invention of the author himself.

With regards to Andrew's confirmation that Jesus is the Messiah above, this is placed in Andrew's mouth for the first time in John's Gospel, but it is in Peter's mouth in the other gospels (e.g. Matthew 16:16). Another apparent contradiction is the naming of Simon as Peter, which occurs mid-way in Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of Matthew, but at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in John's Gospel. The Matthean tradition seems more accurate, since it is followed through with the reason as to why the name was given; for Peter was the Rock upon which Jesus built his Church ([Matthew 16:18](#)). It may be due to the Pauline affiliation of the author John that he wished to re-write the story, removing such a blatant privilege from the opposition of his church. See [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book for the *type* of Christian the author was.

As already mentioned above, the accounts of the calling of the first disciples are completely different in [Mark 1:16-20](#), [Matthew 4:18-22](#), [Luke 5:1-11](#) and John. There are in fact three different versions, all of which are impossible to reconcile. Each of the versions has its problems as well: the first two are brief and are simply difficult to believe; the Lukan version contains the story of Peter's confession which makes little sense in Luke's context; and John's version is full of difficulties as explained above. I am inclined to believe that Luke's version is the most historically accurate; however, with the removal of Peter's confession since it makes no sense in Luke's context. The first disciples probably were fishermen and left their occupations after hearing Jesus and witnessing a miracle.

[1277] The apostle **Philip** is hardly mentioned outside the above passage. He plays no role whatsoever in the other gospels, and plays the role of a not so clever partner in a conversation with Jesus (John 14:8-11). He is said to have preached the gospel in Asia Minor after Jesus' departure where he was arrested and put to death by a Roman Proconsul.

[1278] From this verse, it seems that the author was aware of the other gospel versions of the call to the disciples, since he uses similar calling phrases as Mark 2:14. Therefore, it is uncertain why the author John modified the meeting with the first disciples so much. It may be due to him wishing to illustrate the inferiority of John the Baptist.

[1279] Next to nothing is known of **Nathanael**. Some have thought that he is Bartholomew who is spoken of as a disciple of Jesus in the other gospels, but nothing can be known for certain.

[1280] It is worth noting here that the above statement of Philip is not wholly correct, since there is absolutely nothing in the writing of **Moses** (Torah) about the coming of a Messiah or Saviour figure of Israel; see under Mark 1:1 for more details. If however, Philip or more likely the author meant the Promised Prophet mentioned in Deut 18:18, there is another difficulty, since the Prophet was always seen as distinct from the Messiah; see under John 1:21. So, either Philip is saying that he found the Promised Prophet or that he found the Messiah; it cannot be both. It is more likely that the author wrote the above and made the mistake of not knowing the Torah very well and assumed it contained prophecies of the Messiah, when it did not.

[1281] Philip finds Nathanael and informs him that they have finally found the one prophesied in the Old Testament. Nathanael begins to reject Jesus on the basis of his origin. This is common in many religions, and the Jews of Jesus' time were no different; often people would look at the origin of the claimant rather than the claimant himself. But Philip persists and convinces Nathanael to come with him.

Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and bears testimony to his upright conduct. Naturally, Nathanael is surprised and enquires if Jesus knows him; to which Jesus says that he saw him sitting under a fig-tree. At this, Nathanael bursts out that Jesus is the **son of God and King of Israel!** What leads to this statement is not clear, Jesus may well have simply been standing nearby and did exactly what he said; **he saw him**. However, the author is painting a supernatural picture, of the knowledge of Jesus, which astonished Nathanael.

The above is better interpreted allegorically, since the knowledge of someone's whereabouts would not imply that they are the son of God and King of Israel! It is more likely that Nathanael came and spoke with Jesus and the latter convinced him that he was the awaited Messiah, and that Nathanael was under the fig-tree before. What is the significance of the **fig-tree**? Later in Jesus' life, he curses a fig-tree in Jerusalem (Mark 11:14) and as explained under the comments of that verse, the fig-tree may well have signified the Jewish people; those who rejected Jesus. In light of such an interpretation, Jesus may be referring to Nathanael; that he was under the fig-tree, i.e. that he was under/within the influence of the Jewish people.

[1282] The narrative ends with verse 51, but this verse has caused many problems for many Christians; the main question being whether the verse belongs in the above context. The repetition of **and he said to him** indicates some sort of interpolation and perhaps shifting of verses, since the phrase is rather pointless as the reader is already aware that a conversation is going on between Jesus and Nathanael. Furthermore, the **I tell you all**, indicates that either Jesus was speaking to all the disciples at the end of the conversation with Nathanael or the saying was spoken in a different setting, but placed in the above narrative. The other problem with the saying is the omission of its fulfilment in any of the gospels; nowhere in any of the gospels does the above sign/miracle occur. With this, it is likely that the verse belonged to the sayings on the second coming of Jesus, where he returns with angels and glory (see The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark 13:24-27).

[1283] After Jesus' conversation with Nathanael, he and his disciples go to **Cana**, a town situated just north of Nazareth, where they attend a marriage.

[1284] Soon the **wine** served began to run low, and Jesus' **mother** (who is never named in this gospel) asks Jesus to address the situation. In turn he performs his first miracle according to the Gospel of John; that of turning water into wine. If the account is to be taken as is and be interpreted literally, then the shortage of wine may have been due to the unexpected arrival of the disciples who followed their teacher wherever he went. Thus Mary may have felt that Jesus should do something about it.

[1285] The rather harsh and irrelevant reply of Jesus stated above in the gospel is completely uncalled for and nonsensical, and is contradicted later when Jesus does actually take action on what his mother pointed out.

"These passages from John show that Jesus did not have much regard even for his mother, a relationship which is held in the highest respect and esteem by all decent persons. Will an ordinary Christian today address his mother saying, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' Respect for mothers is a common virtue even among primitive communities. But if the gospel narrative is to be believed, this last Teacher of Israel, this hero of the Mosaic tradition, who came to lead a people from darkness into light and teach them good morals, was rude to his mother and behaved insolently towards her." (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran*, 1985, p.67).

It may be worth mentioning that perhaps the author John was part of the Pauline Church and against the Petrine Church which consisted of many of the family of Jesus; see Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book for more information. What most likely happened is that seeing that the wine was finishing, Mary being worried for the guests asks Jesus to do something about it, since his disciples may in fact have been responsible for the shortage. He in turn may have given a reply (not the above), to which she being confident that he would not disobey her, instructed the servants to do what he tells them.

[1286] Important Words

μετρητός (*metpaytas*) – Noun, accusative plural, masculine of μετρητής (*metraytays*) meaning: *strictly a utensil for measuring liquids; a measure, in the New Testament - a measure holding 39.4 litres or about 10.4 gallons* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1287] If the above account is to be interpreted literally, there are a number of difficulties which cannot be resolved. Why were six large jars of water laying there at the wedding? How did the servants fill such jars with water, noting that they would have held roughly 600 litres of water in total? Why didn't the servants inform the head of the table where the wine had come from? Why did they not show any sign of amazement and believe in Jesus, like his disciples did? To the narrator, all these points seem irrelevant, he only wishes to show that Jesus comes to a wedding, performs a miracle and his disciples believe in him further. Even the moral objection of encouraging drunkenness, which is condemned in the Old Testament (Proverbs 23:29-35) is not addressed by the author.

Other scholars, among them Bultmann, believe the entire story to have originated from pagan tradition (Haenchen, *Hermeneia Commentary Series of John*), particularly the cult of Dionysus, the god of wine. The Dionysus feast was celebrated annually on January 6th, whilst the above reading of Cana became part of the Epiphany liturgy which was also celebrated on January 6th. In the feast of Dionysus, it was said that the fountains of pagan temples spouted wine instead of water.

Another symbolical interpretation has also been suggested; references have been made to the end of days in Jewish thought, that there will be an abundance of wine (Amos 9:13-14, Hos 14:7), and as such the author is portraying that such an end of days has arrived with the coming of the Messiah Jesus.

[1288] Jesus' visit to **Capernaum** occurs after the Marriage in Cana. However, in John's Gospel Jesus' family also come with him, but they are not mentioned in the Synoptic (first three) gospels. The intention of the visit seems different as well, since Jesus does not seem to preach there as he does in the other gospels. Therefore, the visit may be different; perhaps John's version has him visit Capernaum with family before he claims to be a prophet of God, whilst the Synoptic gospels have him visit with the intention of preaching his message.

[1289] The cleansing of the Temple is portrayed to have happened at the end of Jesus' life in the Synoptic (first three) gospels, see Mark 11:15-17, Matthew 21:10-17 and Luke 19:45-46. Yet in John's Gospel it occurred at the very beginning of his ministry. It is difficult to reconcile the two, resulting in many scholars rejecting the historical accuracy of the event completely, whilst others have attempted to argue that he cleansed it twice!

So which is correct? It cannot be argued with certainty either way; those scholars who argue for the accuracy of the Synoptic gospels say that such a serious offence would have resulted in the priests taking quick action against Jesus; his arrest happened just a few days later. Yet in John's Gospel he is permitted to continue his preaching for a further two years and visit the Temple again and again subsequently. Also, to cleanse the Temple would cause such an uproar, that Jesus would not have done so without a strong following and an already successful mission, which would have only happened at the end of his ministry in Judea as portrayed by the Synoptic gospels and not at the beginning as in John's Gospel.

For a detailed commentary of Jesus' actions, see notes under Mark's Gospels. John has much of the same text, however, a few differences as well; the Synoptic (first three) gospels speak of Jesus throwing out the coin-dealers and those selling doves, John adds oxen and sheep as well, which one scholar has argued would be historically very unlikely since the Bible never required an ordinary individual to sacrifice a bull or a sheep. This makes it very unlikely that they would be up for sale to the general public, since they would have produced a great deal of excrement which would have violated the Temple cleanliness. Birds however, are different, they could be carried around in cages and their excrement would not touch the floor (E.P Sanders, *Judaism Practice and Belief*, 1992, p.88).

[1290] Whilst throwing people out of the Temple, Jesus says something different from what he says in the Synoptic (first three) gospels: Jesus rebukes them for making his Father's house (the Temple) into a **marketplace**. This causes the disciples to recall a certain Psalm; 69:9: 'For zeal for thy house has consumed me.' However, it is not certain what this Psalm has to do with Jesus cleansing the Temple of traders, nor is the Psalm a prophecy in any sense. The reason given in John's Gospel for throwing out the people slightly differs as well: in the Synoptic gospels, Jesus is angered and throws them out accusing the people of creating a place of hiding for thieves, thus the reason is linked to some sort of illegal trade or theft; whilst in John's gospel, Jesus is angered due to the Temple becoming a place of trade.

[1291] The reaction of the Jews seems very odd above, while in the Synoptic (first three) gospels they demand Jesus to explain himself and by what authority does he do these actions; in John they demand a **sign**, which is quite nonsensical in the above context. It is likely that John merged two different and unrelated accounts into one and thus confused the event and most likely his readers as well.

In the Synoptic (first three) gospels, Jesus refuses to answer their question as well; however, in John he does: He prophesies the **destruction of the Temple**, which interestingly is used against him in the trial of Jesus in Mark 14:58. The prophecy is not to be interpreted literally, but rather allegorically (verse 21). However, Mark interprets the saying as rebuilding the actual Temple with Jesus' bare hands; he uses the verb οἰκοδομῆσω, which is only used to build buildings and structures; see under Mark 14:58 for its interpretation. It is only in John's Gospel, where the author interprets it allegorically, referring to Jesus' own body. However, there is no reference to Jesus referring to his body as the Temple in the gospels, thus how the Jews were to know that he was referring to his own body and not the Temple is not clear at all.

As explained in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book; by the time John was writing his gospel, the belief of Jesus and his resurrection was cemented and John's Gospel focuses on it far more than the Synoptics, to the point of even contradicting them to prove it. Not only that, but making nonsense out of his narratives; the above is a perfect example: Jesus cleanses the Temple, and instead of demanding why he does so the Jews demand a sign. Rather than explaining or giving them a sign, Jesus then gives them a very obscure prophecy. Would the Jews have been satisfied with such an answer and have left Jesus alone? It is very unlikely, showing the unlikelihood of the above event happening as depicted by John.

[1292] Verse 22 ends with the disciples believing in the scripture regarding Jesus' death and resurrection. There is another problem with this; no such prophecy exists in the scripture (Old Testament) about a dying and resurrecting Messiah. This again is the invention of the author of the gospel, for scripture mentions very little about the Messiah (see under [Mark 1:1](#)), let alone about one dying and returning to life.

It may be worth noting that some early Christians understood the number of years it took to build the Temple to reflect the age of Jesus himself; meaning that he was over forty years old when he was placed on the cross (Augustine, John Tract. XCC 36.107f. and 12). This goes in line with the passage in John's Gospel where the Jews state that Jesus is not yet fifty years old; see [John 8: 48-59](#) - "Before Abraham Was, I Am".

[1293] After cleansing the Temple, Jesus stays in Jerusalem for the rest of the festival. He seems to perform further miracles and gains a following. But for some reason, he does not trust the men; knowing what was in their hearts. It may be the case that he did not wish to reveal his true identity; a play on the Messianic Secret of Mark, perhaps; see under [Mark 3:12](#).

[1294] Whilst still in Jerusalem, Jesus meets **Nicodemus**, who is said to be a Jewish member of the Sanhedrin, a council comprising of elite Jews. He is not spoken of in the Synoptic (first three) gospels, and is mentioned three times in John's Gospel: once here; once in the trial of Jesus; and another when the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross. He is a high-ranking Jew who after hearing some of the teachings of Jesus, seems to have become his secret follower. According to some scholars and the Jewish encyclopaedia, he is Nicodemus ben Gurion mentioned in the Talmud, a popular figure who is said to have performed many miracles.

A gospel by the name of Nicodemus also exists, which dates back to sometime in the third century but is an acknowledged forgery. Within it are descriptions of the trial of Jesus. Nicodemus may not have written a gospel, just maybe notes or at least passed on traditions, particularly about the trial of Jesus since no other disciple of Jesus was present.

[1295] The above discourse between Jesus and Nicodemus is the first time in the Gospel of John where Jesus begins to teach. Much like the purpose of John the Baptist, the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is historically very unlikely to have taken place. The author of the gospel seems to have created the conversation as a ploy to put forward his ideas of what Jesus' message would have been.

Nicodemus comes by **night**, this may be due to the fear of the other Jews, since as mentioned above, he was one of the secret disciples of Jesus. The fact that Nicodemus says that **we know**, shows that he was a representative of some group of Jews who believed in Jesus. The group was probably that which were mentioned in verse 2:23 and likely comprised of Joseph of Arimathea and others not mentioned. What convinced Nicodemus and his friends were the miracles performed by Jesus and not his teachings. In verse 2:24, Jesus reacts unfavourably towards them, not trusting them; it may be due to their lack of belief, in that they simply believed him to be another **teacher from God** due to him performing miracles, much like many other Rabbis later mentioned in the Talmud. The above discourse however, gives Jesus the perfect opportunity to test and correct their poor understanding.

[1296] Important Words

πνεῦμα (*pneuma*) – Noun, nominative singular, neuter meaning: *blowing; wind; breath; life spirit; soul; spirit*. John is playing with words; he is using the same word for spirit and wind (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1297] The conversation above is to show the readers who Jesus really is and how one is to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The message is not as complex as portrayed above: man takes on flesh when he enters the kingdom of the world since he is begotten by his father. If he were to enter the Kingdom of God/Heaven, then he has to be begotten by God. Put in a subtle way, man is to be born again, through the spirit rather than through flesh. The same teaching is put more crudely in 1 John 3:9: “All those being born from God do not sin, *since the seed of His (God's) is in him...*” Nicodemus completely misunderstands the message, asking a rather grotesque question and lacking the intellect to understand allegory. It is unlikely that Nicodemus would have been so dull, since the Old Testament contains many poems full of allegory.

Early Christian writers interpreted the above allegorically as well; speaking of being born again, via the spirit, happens when one accepts the teachings of Jesus and believes in him, thus living his life with a new spirit. Could Nicodemus really not understand such a saying? Unlikely, since similar passages exist speaking of God's spirit being poured out to the people: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that *I will pour out my spirit on all flesh*; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, *I will pour out my spirit*” (Joel 2:28-29). And in Ezekiel: “A new heart I will give you, and *a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh*” (36:26). With numerous other parallels, it is likely that Nicodemus would have understood the metaphors of Jesus and not have been as dull as made out by the author of this gospel. Even though the exact character and methodology is a mystery (verse 8), Nicodemus would have understood the allegorical speech.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi has a similar beautiful Teaching. He writes:

“Seeking forgiveness at my hands demands a type of a death so that you may be given birth to a new life. It is purposeless to take the pledge of bai'at without sincerity of heart. When you take my pledge of bai'at, God expects an undertaking from your heart. So the one who accepts me with a true heart and truly seeks forgiveness of his sins, the Forgiving and Merciful God surely forgives his sins. Thus he becomes like a person just born of his mother; then the angels protect him” (Malfuzat, vol. 3, p. 262).

The other alternative interpretation is to interpret the above in reference to verse 5, as the Christian Baptism and the rebirth associated with it. If this be the case, then it would have been impossible for Nicodemus to understand it like so, since Jewish baptism, although having a link between water and spirit (see under [Mark 1:8](#)) did not speak of rebirth in the Christian sense.

[1298] Thus far, Jesus has taught Nicodemus that to enter the Kingdom of God, one has to be born anew, of the spirit. The latter asks how this is done, wanting practical advice. Jesus' answer takes over the entire passage and Nicodemus fades away into the background. After confirming the lack of intelligence of this Jewish teacher, Jesus states in verse 13 that no one has ascended into heaven, except one who descended from heaven; referring to himself. However, this is not entirely accurate; what of prophet Elijah? He had not come down from heaven, but was born as a human and never claimed to be more than human, and is spoken of as gone up into heaven (2 Kings 2:11). “In fact, it (the above statement of Jesus) means that only those people who go to heaven whom Allah takes under His care from their childhood, keeping them under his protection and control” (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *Did Jesus Redeem Mankind?*, 1960, P.70).

[1299] Jesus finally comes to answer the question placed in Nicodemus' mouth: to be born anew and through the spirit, one has to believe in the crucifixion of Jesus; this is what verse 14 is hinting at. The reference about the lifting up of the serpent is mentioned in Numbers Chapter 21:

"And the people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.'

Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

And the people came to Moses, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people.

And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.'

So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (verses 5-9).

The people sinned and were therefore punished by God; to be saved from the punishment they were instructed to look at the fiery serpent made by Moses. Removing the idea of **elevating** the snake as verse 14 states, if Jesus had spoken historically of the snake and likened himself to it, it would simply mean that the Jews at the time of Jesus had sinned, and to revoke the punishment of God, they were to turn to the Messiah and believe in him. Yet, John, the author adds the elevation of the snake and Jesus, thus ignoring the purpose of the snake and only emphasising the aspect of elevation, i.e. physical elevation and Jesus' physical elevation on the cross.

[1300] Important Words

μονογενῆ (*monogene*) adjective accusative, singular, masculine from μονογενής (*monogenes*) meaning: *unique, an only child born to human parents, as a child born in a unique way* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

Numerous older editions of the Bible will add the word *begotten*, however, this is just an interpretation of the Greek word, rather like the RSV **only** is a better translation. The word itself has been used a number of times in the New Testament, often to refer to the *only* child of a parent, e.g. Luke 7:12, Luke 8:42, Luke 9:38. It is only in the Gospel of John where it is used to describe the relationship of Jesus with God. Recall the [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) where the Gospel of John is seen as a highly evolved piece of work, written much later than the other gospels and at a time when the divinity of Jesus was firmly established.

The above is an example, where the Synoptic (first three) gospels speak of Jesus as *the son of God*, but never use **only**. For the author of John's Gospel, he wanted to ensure to make that differentiation: Marking out Jesus and pushing aside all the other 'sons of God'. Question is, all the references of Jesus being the *son of God* in the other Gospels and even in Paul's letters, why is it *only* the gospel of John (and one reference in 1 John) that Jesus is the **only** son of God? Why didn't Mark write it? Why didn't Matthew? What about Luke? What about the Q source? What about the other traditions which Matthew had access to (known as M)? What about the other traditions which Luke had access to (known as L)? Why do none of these sources mention this very very important point? It just proves the evolution of the position of Jesus. In fact, even for Paul he wasn't, when Paul states:

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brothers" (Rom 8:29).

The author of John's gospel has taken the ideas of Paul (who saw Christ as the highest-ranking creation of God) and pushed this idea to make Jesus even higher.

Commentary

John 3:16 is possibly the favourite and oft-quoted verse of the New Testament; since it explains the purpose and reason Jesus was sent into the world. It was because **God loved the world that He sent his only son** to give people **eternal life**. As Muslims we have no problem with this, and it is true that God loves His people, and when He does so, He sends His prophets to guide the people back to Him. Believing in these prophets gives people eternal life in the hereafter and thus the above verse poses no difficulty to the Islamic belief. However, the verse should not be interpreted to mean that the *only* way to gain eternal life is through belief in Jesus; it must be read in its historical context and setting. For the Jews, this is the only way for eternal life; they must believe in the Messiah God sent to them. See under [John 14:6](#) for a fuller analysis of a similar claim.

Often emphasis is placed on *belief*, all the ones **believing** in Jesus will be saved, and so for many Christians this belief is enough and is what truly matters in the hereafter. But this is not reading the passage in context; just a few verses later, Jesus speaks of people *practising wickedness* and those doing truth, their *works* being manifested. As in the letter of James, it is belief and works which are required for salvation, not just the Pauline belief without works.

One final note is worth mentioning, in the Synoptic (first three) gospels, Jesus is the 'son of God', here our author has added the adjective **only**, or **unique**. This is no doubt the interpretation and opinion of the author. In fact, as is seen, much of the above speech cannot be attributed to Jesus, see next point.

[1301] Jesus proclaims that he was not sent into the world to **judge the world**, but to save it. Those who believe in Jesus will not be judged at all; they seem to bypass all judgement and will be granted paradise immediately according to the above. Based on Jesus' saying, it also seems that the only way to salvation is through believing in the sonship of Jesus, since all those who do not believe are judged and subsequently condemned. This in turn has caused some Christians difficulties since it means that those who have not heard of Jesus have not the chance to believe in him and they, too, are subsequently judged and condemned, which is wholly unfair and does not fit well with a just God.

Thus the contradictory nature of the above, along with its rather harsh and unfair treatment of those who have never come across Jesus in the world mean that the above is without doubt the words of the author and not of Jesus. They betray an evolved Christian interpretation of Jesus' status, which is completely absent in the Synoptic (first three) gospels. To add to this, according to Paul: "all shall stand *before* the judgement seat of God;" (Rom 14:10). This is a direct contradiction to the above. It seems that Paul (who wrote before our author John) was completely unaware of the saying of Jesus above.

[1302] Those who **do evil** are warned that such practices lead to them to **hate the light** of God. Wickedness is a very serious sin, as explained further by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him): "The wicked should be punished before the disbelievers... this is the way of Allah, that when a nation becomes wicked and immoral, another nation is made to rule over it." (*Malfuzat, new edition*, vol 2, p.653)

[1303] The light above represents Jesus; those committing excessive sins and being naturally evil hate Jesus, since if they approach him and come to Jesus, he in turn will admonish them and correct them, which they do not wish. However, the opposite is the case of those who are good, for they will turn to Jesus since already they are heavily engaged with God's services and in His worship.

[1304] After the discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus and his disciples visit **Judea**. Hold on, Jesus is already in Judea, he's in Jerusalem (John 2:23), the capital of Judea! The author John has made a bit of a blunder while writing his gospel, mixing up numerous stories and traditions.

This is the only instance where Jesus is reported to have baptised people himself, but the author later contradicts himself by stating that Jesus was not baptising at all! (John 4:2). It is likely that he, the author had access to numerous traditions, which were in conflict with each other and he simply placed them in his gospels without realising the apparent contradiction.

[1305] The author next returns to John the Baptist and his testimony regarding Jesus. However, the order of sequence is rather baffling: according to 1:31 the whole purpose of John's coming and mission was to reveal the Messiah Jesus. This was why he was baptising, so that God could reveal to him who the Messiah was and so he could then pass on the message. Thus he fulfilled his mission, or at least continued the proclamation that the Messiah had come. Yet, according to verse 23, he is still baptising. Why was he still baptising?

[1306] This verse was added either by the author or a later redactor to explain an apparent contradiction: according to Mark 1:14, it was *after* John was arrested that Jesus came to Galilee to preach the gospel. Thus the sequence of events in the Synoptics (first three gospels) is that once John was out of the picture (in prison) Jesus begins his ministry. But in John Jesus has already been to Galilee (1:43) while John is still out and about baptising.

[1307] This verse speaks of an argument erupting between some Jews and one of John's disciples, which paves the way for the introduction of Jesus. However, the above creates a problem: according to Chapter 1 of this gospel, the disciples of John witnessed his testimony of Jesus; that he is the *lamb of God*, yet for some reason they do not understand why people are going to Jesus who was baptising a little further away, and they seem to resent it. Firstly, it is not certain why they remained with John, but should have left him and joined the followers of Jesus. Secondly, it is baffling why they complain to their master that Jesus is baptising, since Jesus is obviously superior to John the Baptist (John 1:30). Again, it seems that the author is appending different and independent traditions together without realising the chaos he is causing.

[1308] Many scholars have argued that the above passage is a doublet of Chapter 1, as the theme is the same. In 1:19-21 and 3:28 John clarifies that he is not the Christ. In both 1:30 and 3:28 John speaks of preparing the way for the one to come after him. In 1:30 and 3:30 John is spoken of as lower than the one after him. It is therefore argued that by merging the two accounts, many of the difficulties above are resolved: Jesus comes to the land of Judea (3:22) at the very beginning of his ministry, before going to Jerusalem, and up to this point he is rather unknown. He begins baptising alongside John, thus explaining the puzzled hostility of the latter's disciples (3:26) since they have never seen or heard of him before. John then gives his testimony about Jesus (1:36 and 3:29-30) and the disciples go off and follow Jesus (1:37). It may have been the case that the author had access to two accounts of the same event and rather than merging them as he should have done, placed them side by side.

Seeing that his own disciples are to part from him and go to Jesus, John confesses his own inferior position. God decides what is to be given to people (verse 27). John is not the bridegroom, but rather the best man, who is placed at the side and who witnesses the joy of the bridegroom and in turn is happy for him. Thus marking the end of John's ministry, his joy is now complete (verse 29) and he is to decrease while Jesus is to increase (verse 30).

[1309] This verse contrasts two types of people; those from **earth** and those from **heaven**. The author may have been contrasting John the Baptist to Jesus, which can be awkward since John comes from God as well. But such an argument wouldn't have concerned the author who has often downplayed the role and position of John in contrast to Jesus, particularly to silence his opponents; disciples of John the Baptist.

[1310] This is not correct, since already a few disciples have gone and received Jesus, along with the fact in verse 26 *all come to him*. It simply shows that the author has modelled the verse on 1:11 where it, too, says that no one receives Jesus. Again, this is contradicted by the very next verse (33), where the readers are informed that those who do receive his testimony attest that God is true.

[1311] Important Words

ἀπειθῶν (*apeithown*) – Verb, present active participle, nominative singular, masculine of ἀπειθεῖν (*apeithow*) meaning: *in relation to God; to disobey; in relation to the gospel to*

disbelieve; refuse to believe (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). I have translated it as *disbelieving* as opposed to the *disobeys* in the RSV, since I do not believe it is in relation to God, and further *disbelieving* is the opposite of *believing* in the first part of the verse. It flows better and makes more sense.

[1312] John seems to continue with his long discourse, however again there is a slight difficulty with the passage above; that being the identity of the speaker. The most natural option is that John is the speaker since he was speaking in the previous verse and no new speaker has been introduced in the text. But the style of speech does not match John's very well, and seems to rather match Jesus' style, particularly his speech to Nicodemus in his discourse. The essential message and wording are very similar, but the connection between the end of the discourse (verse 21) and the beginning of the above passage (verse 31) is awkward.

There is debate amongst scholars as to who is the one giving the **spirit** in the latter part of verse 34, whether it is Jesus or God Himself. I have opted for God giving the spirit, in agreement with scholars such as Bultmann and Barrett. That all things are given to Jesus (verse 35) has left many Christian theologians confused and unable to distinguish between the nature and even the roles of Jesus and God. Yet, the number of times Jesus proclaims his obedience to God (5:3, 6:28) contradicts the above. It goes more in line with the Islamic viewpoint of Jesus, where the latter was simply a prophet, who like all other prophets only does the will of God. Finally, the passage (much like the discourse with Nicodemus) ends as a dire warning that those believing in Jesus will receive eternal life (i.e. be admitted to heaven) while those disbelieving will receive God's wrath.

[1313] The **lord** above seems to refer to Jesus, which shows that he was making more disciples than John. This shouldn't be surprising, since the only purpose of John's coming according to this author was to identify Jesus (John 1:31); so one would naturally expect Jesus to gain not some, but all of John's disciples! However, this is contradicted in many instances; since John the Baptist, after revealing Jesus, continues baptising (John 3:23) and he still retains some of his disciples years later (Acts 19:1-3). As already stated under John 1:31 the sole purpose of John's mission, namely to identify Jesus, is the opinion of the author of the gospel and is not historical.

[1314] This is odd, as earlier the author John states that Jesus was baptising (John 3:22, 26), but here he backtracks and states that Jesus himself was never baptising. This could be blamed on a later gloss, where scholars have argued that the word **καίτοιτε** (**although**) is never used elsewhere in John's Gospel. But what would the reason be for a later scribe to add this verse to John's text? It may be due to the fact that according to John's Gospel, the earthly Jesus' baptism was of no use and it was rather his breathing which enabled his disciples to receive the Holy Spirit (20:22).

[1315] **Samaria** was the region just south of Galilee. It was named after Shemer, by the Israelite King Omri (1 Kings 16:24). Many Jews of the Northern Kingdom lived in Samaria, but after Assyria invaded the land in 722 BCE, the Assyrian King deported the majority of the Jews. Foreigners came and lived in the land instead. But, being unaware of the dangerous animals living in and around the land, they sought help from the king to send Israelite Priests back to the land to teach the population the *Law of the god of the land* (2 Kings 17).

But that shouldn't be taken literally, since I'm quite sure the foreigners were able to handle wild animals if they were able to invade the entire country. Also, Israelite priests probably weren't the best option to help them battle against wild animals. Allegorically, the text could be interpreted that the people who lived there were like animals, i.e. they did not know the Law. Israelite Priests were sent back and taught the inhabitants the laws of the Torah. The result was that the land was mixed with Jews and foreigners living by the Law of the Torah, but they remained slightly separate from the mainstream Jews, who did not see them as Jewish at all.

Many scholars have questioned the historical likelihood of Jesus going in and preaching to the Samaritans. This is mainly due to the absence of any such report in the Synoptic (first three) gospels, along with the direct instruction *not* to go to them in **Matthew 10:5**. Some interpreters may argue that Jesus *first* visited Samaria and then prohibited his disciples to go there later in Matthew 10:5; however, the visit to Samaria was very successful and thus a ban after a successful visit would seem very odd and unlikely. Likewise,

it would not make any sense for Jesus to prohibit his disciples from going there only to break this prohibition later in his ministry without any explanation.

There is no real way of explaining away the contradiction between the above Johannine version, where Jesus visits Samaria and Matthew 10:5 where he prohibits his disciples from going there. The only option left is that Jesus went to Samaria *after* the crucifixion. The Jews in Jerusalem disbelieved in Jesus and tried to have him killed; it would therefore make perfect sense that Jesus should travel to Samaria and be readily accepted there.

[1316] The above resembles a typical Old Testament type scene, where a man sits by a well and is greeted by a woman who comes to the well to draw water. There are so many examples: the servant of Abraham, who is commissioned to find a wife for Isaac, makes his camels kneel by a well and waits for one of the maidens to come out of the city to draw water - Rebekah comes out and becomes the wife of Isaac (Gen 24); Jacob meets his wife Rachel at a well where she comes to water the sheep (Gen 29); and Moses, too, sits by a well and meets his wife Zipporah there (Exodus 2). Even though this is not a story about Jesus meeting a potential partner, John may still be using the Old Testament type scene, perhaps without even realising.

[1317] Our author John was himself a Gentile and writing for a Gentile audience, hence at certain times throughout his gospel he has to explain certain things which a Jewish audience would already know. The above explanation is an example.

[1318] Important Words

κύριε (*kurie*) – Noun, vocative singular, masculine of κύριος (*kurios*) meaning: *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house; also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from fourteen years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). For the sake of consistency and to give readers the insight of the variety of uses of the word, I have translated the above word as *lord* as opposed to *Sir* in the WEB and RSV which is also completely viable. For more information on the term, see under [Luke 1:43](#).

[1319] The initial request for water seems to have been a ploy by the author to open the discussion on what is really important; the **living water** which Jesus has to offer. Much like all the Jews in John's Gospel, they often fail to understand the metaphors of Jesus and take much of the sayings literally. In the above, the woman wishes for this living water in which she will never thirst again, thus saving her time and effort in drawing out water from the well.

So what is this **living water** Jesus has on offer? It is not Jesus himself, but rather something he gives, something spiritual. It is not eternal life, since when one drinks it, it becomes a well of eternal life in him (verse 14), thus it in fact leads one to eternal life. The **living water** is thus most likely to be the actual revelation and teachings of Jesus; in the Old Testament wisdom is spoken in much the same terms: "The *teaching* of the wise is a *fountain* of life, that one may *avoid the snares of death*" (Prov 13:14). Later, a similar symbol is used by the author to refer to Jesus' revelations and teachings; see under [John 6:26-59](#): The Bread of Life.

[1320] Important Words

For the translation of προσκυνέω (*proskuneō*, pay homage) see note under [Matthew 2:2](#).

[1321] The Samaritans rejected the Jerusalem Temple, but made their own Temple at Mount Gerizim. Jesus is not preaching against the Jerusalem Temple as some interpreters have argued; this is not the case as he himself went to the Temple of Jerusalem for the Passover. What in fact Jesus may be pointing out, is that God would not be worshipped on the mountain nor at the Temple, as neither has proven to be maintained by the pure and pious. The officials at the Jerusalem Temple attempted to kill the Messiah, and the Samaritan mountain never was a place of worship ordained by God.

It is also likely that Jesus did in fact say the above words; through a revelation he may have been informed that the Jerusalem Temple would be destroyed, and in fact that it was in the land of Arabia where God would be truly and properly worshipped, which was to be an eternal peaceful abode of worship. This being Mecca where the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was born and where the Kaa'ba (house of God) still remains standing and is the focal point of worship for over a billion Muslims across the globe.

[1322] Jesus is pointing out that **salvation** at that time is only **from the Jews**. He was addressing a Samaritan woman, informing her that she was in error and that God could only be reached through following the Torah. Interestingly, this verse directly contradicts the latter Christian doctrine, that it was only through belief in Jesus' sacrifice that one could attain salvation. It is for this reason that some scholars have tried to argue that this verse is a later addition to the Johannine text. Yet, the saying sounds authentic, and does seem to agree with the Jewish image of Jesus, who preached Torah interpretations throughout the Synoptic (first three) gospels at least.

[1323] True worship of God is not necessarily dependent on location, but rather dependent on intentions.

[1324] Many scholars believe that initially this verse immediately preceded verse 18 above, as it flows more naturally; it would also make sense that the woman leaves the water jar behind (maybe for Jesus to drink?) and rushes to her town to proclaim that she has met someone who knows all about her.

[1325] Jesus convinces the woman that he is the Messiah, and in turn she rushes to her village to give them the good news. In the meantime, the disciples return and offer Jesus some food, but Jesus replies telling them that he is not hungry (verse 33) and that his food (desire perhaps?) is that he may complete his mission; i.e. to proclaim the good news to the people (verse 34). But just like the woman, the disciples also understand Jesus' words literally and fail to understand what he is talking about. He then explains in a parable, which has strong parallels in the Synoptic (first three) gospels, see [Matthew 9:35-38](#). The Harvest is Great.

[1326] The woman returns with her village folk and many people believed in Jesus. This in turn goes in line with the overall view of this commentary; that Jesus survived the crucifixion and it was only after he was rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem, that he turned to the Samaritans and was readily accepted by them.

[1327] The verse does not really have a context, since after he leaves Samaria he moves onto Galilee without even visiting his home town.

[1328] In John, Jesus visits Jerusalem numerous times; his recent visit is recorded in John 2:13, where he is described to have performed many signs (2:23). It was this perhaps that certain Galileans recalled.

[1329] Important Words

υἱός (*uios*) – Noun, nominative singular, masculine, meaning *infant; babe; young child* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). John here agrees with Matthew in that it was the son of the centurion/official who was sick and dying.

[1330] The above miracle occurs very early in Jesus' career in John's Gospel; very soon after Jesus visits Samaria and is accepted there. However, the location of the miracle is different, in [Matthew 8:5-13](#) and [Luke 7:1-10](#) it occurs in Capernaum while in John's Gospel it is in Cana. For a detailed analysis of the miracle, see notes under Matthew.

[1331] 1pm.

[1332] In John 2:11 the reader is informed that Jesus' first sign was the turning water into wine. Later in 2:23 many believed in Jesus, beholding the *signs* which he did. However, in the above Jesus heals the boy and this is referred to as the **second sign** which Jesus performed. Thus Jesus does one sign, then many and then the second sign! The author of the gospel has obviously taken multiple traditions to write his gospel but in the process created inconsistencies like the above.

[1333] This is one of the rare occasions where John's Gospel has a similar tradition to the Synoptics (first three) gospels. It is unlikely that John used either Matthew or Luke as his source, but probably had access to another source which narrated the same event. The account is similar enough to call it a variant, but it has numerous differences from the Synoptic (first three gospels) versions. In both accounts, the centurion begs Jesus to come and heal his son, but the reply differs: in Matthew, Jesus agrees to come and heal the boy; but in John, the reply is strange and makes little sense. It is as though Jesus is rebuking the centurion; he orders the centurion to go away and heals his boy from a distance, which is later confirmed when the centurion returns home.

Analysing the account, the first problem which comes to light is Jesus' response to the centurion's request; as mentioned above it is rather harsh as opposed to the other healing narratives. Why Jesus then heals the boy after the harsh response is also unexplained; some interpreters have argued that Jesus wished the man to move from a faith, based on witnessing signs to that of believing in Jesus' words. But it is probably more likely that the two verses (48 and 49) were inserted into the text later, as the narrative flows a lot more smoothly if these verses are omitted. The centurion asks Jesus to heal his son (verse 47); Jesus responds by telling him that his son is healed, and now go away (verse 51).

Once the centurion is told to depart, he does so and meets his slaves who inform him that his son is better. Thus Jesus heals the boy at a distance; a miracle which is attested by Jewish literature as well. The son of Rabbi Gamaliel suffered from a fever, and the Rabbi sent out two of his pupils to Hanina ben Dosa to bring him back and cure his son. Hanina walked into another room to pray and returned to the pupils informing them to return, as the son was cured of his illness. He then sent the two pupils back with the message: "Go, the fever has left him." The pupils took note of the time and returned. In response to this news Gamaliel said: "That's just the way it happened; in that moment the fever left him"(Talmud, bBer. 34b; yBer. 9d).

The account ends with the centurion and his entire household believing, but believing in what? It would not have been that Jesus was the Messiah, nor any claim of being divine since no such claim is made by Jesus yet in this gospel. It would have simply been the belief that Jesus healed his child, much like in the Matthew and Luke versions.

[1334] Jesus visits Jerusalem again, most likely for the Feast of Tabernacles.

[1335] Textual Variant

The majority of early manuscripts; P⁶⁶, P⁷⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus omit the latter part of verse 3 and all of verse 4. However, Codex Alexandrinus and the King James Version add verse 4. These verses were added by later Christian scribes to help explain why the water bubbled up in verse 7 (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.255).

[1336] The account thus far discusses the healing pool; many of the sick would lie next to it waiting for the angel to come and stir the water and thus be healed. After giving an overview, the author focuses on one person; in modern terms it zooms in on one man who has been sick for thirty-eight years. The duration of the sickness illustrates the magnitude of the healing miracle.

Jesus asks the man if he wishes to be healed in verse 6. The reader of the gospel would naturally think that any sick man would want to be healed, but the author only wishes for the sick man to give an account of his hopeless situation. The sick man does not ask Jesus to be cured either; this is no doubt because he is not aware of to whom he is

talking.

Jesus then commands the man to get up and **lift his mat**. The command is similar to the Markan command in 2:11, where Jesus commands the lame man to do the same thing. But the command in Mark fits well in its context; the lame man is brought to Jesus on a mattress or couch by others, Jesus heals the man and commands the man to lift his own mattress and walk, thus illustrating and providing proof of the miracle. Yet the same command makes little sense in the above Johannine narrative. There is no mention of any mat; granted it would be reasonable that he was lying on something rather than the cold stone floors all day, but who brought the man there?

The account speaks of the man being able to move, but not fast enough into the pool, since he moans about being outpaced by others. It would seem that he was already able to lift up his mat and walk, since he himself must have done so every morning and night to return to his residence. For these reasons, numerous scholars including Wellhausen have argued that the command was simply borrowed from Mark without much thought. The author probably did not know himself how the man came there every morning nor how he got his food. This does not seem important to him, the only thing which is important is that the man was healed by Jesus.

[1337] Whilst the command to lift up his mat in Mark seems to simply serve the purpose of displaying that the man was healed, in John's Gospel it seems to stir up the Jews and cause a serious **Sabbath** controversy. It seems odd and surprising that the Jews seem unaware and not concerned with the fact that the man who had been suffering from an illness for thirty-eight years was all of a sudden made better! Some may have witnessed the miracle, but to the author they are not bothered or concerned; rather, they focus on the Sabbath regulations and rebuke the man for breaking the Sabbath Laws of carrying a burden (see under [Mark 3:2](#) for more details on Sabbath Laws). However, the man was only doing what he was told, and this is what leads the author onto the discussion which really matters to him; the relationship between Jesus and God.

[1338] This again seems odd; the author explains later that Jesus does not link sin and illness (9:2), but the link is clearly attributed to the man's illness. Thus it is likely that the author simply copied his source without realising that he later contradicts it.

[1339] Important Words

ἐδιώκων (*ediokon*) – verb imperfect active indicative 3rd plural of διώκω (*dioko*) meaning: *press forward, hasten, run, hostile pursuit, persecute*, (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The WEB translates this word as *persecuted*, however the word is in the imperfect tense, so **were persecuting** is a more accurate translation.

[1340] The man is made well by Jesus and is then told to **sin no more** in case he falls ill again. One would expect the man to be full of gratitude and thank Jesus for the healing and warning, but the opposite seems to be the case; he runs off and informs the same Jews who rebuked him earlier for breaking the Sabbath. The author then attempts to build the case for the reason why the Jews were persecuting Jesus. However, it is not clear which persecution he is referring to. Is he referring to the arrest and trial of Jesus? If so, one would expect the case of the healing on the Sabbath to be raised, but the trials of Jesus in the gospels make no mention of the accusation. Having said that, it may be possible that this accusation was brought forward but not recorded in the present four gospels; see under [Mark 3:6](#) for the account in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus where such an allegation was raised. It seems likely again that the current author is simply recording from his source without much thought. He is eager to get to the main point; that being the relationship between Jesus and God.

[1341] Jesus answers his accusers; the fact that God always works means that Jesus must always work too. However, this raises the problem of interpreting Gen 2:2, where it is recorded that after creation, on the seventh day God *rested* from all the work that He had done. This was one of the reasons for the Sabbath: "Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and *rested the seventh*

day, therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:9-11, emphasis is mine). The author John seems to be unaware of the Sabbath ruling in this regard and has Jesus contradict the earlier revelation of God in Genesis and Exodus.

[1342] The interpretation of the author John is misleading and incorrect. As already explained in Luke 2:50, referring to God as one’s Father is not a new concept and is in line with current Jewish thought. Later in 10:32, the Jews make the same accusation and even threaten to stone Jesus, but instead of agreeing with them and proving that he is the divine son of God, Jesus refutes them by quoting an Old Testament passage; see under [John 10:32](#) for further details.

[1343] The sayings of Jesus above are regarding obedience; Jesus is not equating himself to God, rather the fact that he does nothing of his own accord and simply does what God does, illustrating the lower status of Jesus to the point of pure obedience. Jesus does what he is told to do, much like all prophets of God.

[1344] This verse brings about a new concept, thus far not spoken of in the Gospel of John but mentioned in the other gospels. The verse is out of place here though, since in verses 19-20 the son only copies what the Father does, i.e. Jesus only does what he is told and cannot do anything of his own accord, but in the present verses all of sudden all judgement is passed over to him and now he judges all, something which obviously the Father is not doing.

The concept of the Messiah judging the world, however, is not alien to Jewish thought and was already attested in documents before the coming of Jesus. However, it is based upon Messianic interpretations of Dan 7:13 which was a later interpretation and not the focus or idea of the author of Daniel (see comments under [Mark 2:10](#)). It is likely that the author John was recording from traditions which already attributed Jesus the Messiah to this role. It is very unlikely that the sayings came from Jesus himself, since he himself did nothing of the sort in his earthly life, and thus the early Christians, inheriting this concept of the Messiah making judgements, therefore placed it in his second coming.

[1345] The above should be interpreted allegorically and symbolically as opposed to literally. For Jesus is speaking in the present, that the hour **now is**, where the dead will hear his voice and receive life. See [Luke 7:16](#) for further details.

[1346] See under verse 23.

[1347]

Since Jesus himself did not judge anyone, nor played the role of judge in his lifetime, the author has placed such a role in his second coming. Those who have done good will proceed to the resurrection of life whilst those who have done evil will proceed to the resurrection of death. Verse 30 brings the reader back to verse 19, where Jesus says that he is not able to do anything but imitate the Father. But then this contradicts verse 22 where Jesus states that the Father does not judge, but has given judgement to Jesus. The entire passage betrays the hand of the author inserting, and chopping and changing his sources to get his message across.

[1348] Jesus cannot bear witness to himself; the author already knows what the response is when Jesus speaks about his relationship with God, in that the Jews reject and attempt to kill him. But Jesus points to One whose witness none can reject, that being God Himself.

[1349] The Jews went to John who bore witness to the truth (1:19-27). It would simply mean that John foretold of another who was to come, but Jesus does not accept testimonies from humans, only from God. What therefore was the point of mentioning John at all? The answer may lie **in order that you may be saved**. That upon reflection of his witness, some of the Jews may have come to acknowledge Jesus as the foretold one.

[1350] After discussing the weakness of John's testimony, the author moves onto the ultimate testimony, i.e. that of God. But, according to the author, the Jews have never heard His voice nor seen His form. It seems that the author is completely unaware of the Old Testament tradition of Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy Jewish elders seeing God in Exodus 24:9-10.

[1351] This again is not accurate if the author had meant the Torah, since none of the books of the Torah make any mention of the Messiah, nor do the numerous history books after the Torah (Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc.). For a detailed analysis of the Messiah in the Old Testament, see under [Mark 1:1](#). Suffice to say for now is that the author John had not read the Old Testament, since he is simply inventing assumptions, perhaps not with the intention of deceiving his readers, but simply recording what he himself has heard without clarifying it.

[1352] Here Jesus complains that since he comes from God the Jews reject him, but had another come in his own name, they would have accepted him. The problem arises as to who came in their own name and were well received by the Jews? Some scholars have argued that it would refer to Simon bar Kokhba who claimed to be the Messiah in 132 CE, but this was after John's Gospel was written. This in turn has led other scholars to believe that the above verse was written by a later scribe who inserted it at a later date. Either way, the verse is very obscure.

[1353] See comments under verse 39 regarding the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament. As indicated there, Moses made absolutely no mention of any Messiah to come in the future.

[1354] Chapter 6 begins with Jesus in Galilee; he goes across the Sea of Galilee to the other side. It is rather odd that Jesus suddenly appears in Galilee after healing in Jerusalem in the previous chapter. This has led many scholars, to propose some sort of rearrangement in the chapters. They suggest that Chapter 6 should be placed directly after Chapter 4 which ends with Jesus healing the centurion's son in Galilee. Verse 4 above states that the Passover was near, which would have prompted Jesus to go to Jerusalem as Chapter 5 has. Thus the order suggested is: Jesus heals in Galilee (Ch. 4); he then crosses the Sea of Galilee and feeds five thousand (Ch. 6), then goes up to Jerusalem (Ch. 5); and finally returns to Galilee (Ch. 7). However, it should be noted that there is no external manuscript evidence to support a re-arrangement.

[1355] Our author John was himself a Gentile and writing for a Gentile audience, hence at certain times throughout his gospel he has to explain certain things which a Jewish audience would already know. The above explanation is an example. The verse doesn't really help in our story either, it seems quite irrelevant.

[1356] As regarding the account itself, this is one of the rare instances where the Gospel of John has a very similar story to those of the Synoptics (first three gospels). There is debate amongst the scholars of whether John was dependent on the other gospels, but such a debate does not concern us in this commentary. For a detailed analysis of the feeding of the five thousand, see notes under [Mark 6:32-44](#).

Verse 5 begins the narrative: Jesus asks his disciple **Philip** for advice of what they should do with such a large crowd, feeling somewhat responsible for their well-being. The author does not wish to portray Jesus as not knowing what to do, so makes it clear that Jesus was only testing Philip when asking the question. Philip does not help much, as he simply says that it is impossible and far too expensive to feed the crowd. However, Andrew then informs Jesus of some bread and fish a young boy is carrying; why the boy is carrying them and for whom is not explained and is of no concern to the author. The disciples are then ordered to make the crowds sit down (verse 10); Jesus then blesses the food and he himself distributes it to the crowds. The practicality of Jesus himself distributing food to five thousand does not concern the author either, he only wishes to push the disciples to the background and attribute the miracle solely to Jesus.

There are a number of differences in the above Johannine account versus the account in the other gospels; the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples is different, along with the carrier of the bread and fish, and in the Synoptic (first three) gospels it is the food of the disciples themselves whilst in John the bread seems to be taken from a young lad who appears to either be part of the crowd or part of Jesus' party. Other than these, the account is more or less the same.

[1357] After the crowds have eaten, they are amazed (unlike the Synoptic gospels) and wish to declare Jesus king, thinking him to be **the Prophet** who was to come. The reference is likely to be the Prophet who was to be like Moses in Deut 18:18 (see under [John 1:21](#) for more information). But seeing the political nature of such titles, and not wishing to be part of it, and perhaps knowing that he was not the Prophet promised to Moses, Jesus withdraws again back to the mountain, contradicting verse 3 where he is already at the mountain.

[1358] Like [Mark 6:45-52](#) and [Matthew 14:22-33](#), the Gospel of John also records the above miracle; he extends the distance of the boat and shore in verse 19 but then adds that after Jesus climbs into the boat, they **immediately** land on shore, which may point to it being closer to land than the author makes out. For a more detailed analysis, see notes under Mark's Gospel.

[1359] After Jesus crosses the sea, the crowd which he fed seek him (perhaps for more food). They themselves find numerous boats and cross the sea to Capernaum where they find him and ask when he got there. However, according to both Mark and Matthew, directly after the feeding of the five thousand and after Jesus walks on water, their boat lands in *Gennesaret* where Jesus is brought the sick to be healed. John's version is completely different: after the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on water, the boat seems to land in **Capernaum**, where Jesus is later met by the same crowd who are then rebuked by Jesus for their lack of faith (see below).

The two versions cannot be reconciled, nor would it be possible that Jesus healed five thousand and walked on water twice in his ministry. Thus, the only way to interpret both versions is that it was a tradition which both Mark and John had access to and placed it in a rather random fashion in their respective gospels.

[1360] The same crowd who were fed by a few loaves of bread find Jesus, but are accused of simply wanting more bread. However, this may not have been the case since at the end of the miracle, the crowd wanted to carry off Jesus and proclaim him king (6:15). Either the author John had forgotten what he wrote earlier or he only wished to portray the crowds in a bad light.

[1361] Important Words

Εσφραγισεν (*Esphralisen*) – Verb, aorist active indicative, 3rd person singular of σφραγίζω (*Sphiralzo*) meaning: *pass; seal; keeping something secret – seal up. As providing a sign of identification or ownership – mark with a seal. To confirm; attest; certify* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Thus the meaning of the verse is that God had chosen Jesus to be His Messiah; that Jesus was approved and thus God set His seal on him.

[1362] The Jews are rebuked for wishing to have bread of this world and not everlasting bread which Jesus provides; that being his teaching and revelation. The point echoes the case of the Samaritan woman who, too, wishes to drink eternal water (John 4: The Discourse with the Woman of Samaria). They ask him what kind of work they should do, and Jesus replies that the work is to believe in him (verse 29). This shows the theological advancement of the author, who being a Pauline (See [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book), considered the works of the Jews (the Torah) to be of no consequence and that they should be replaced by the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, which is precisely what Paul argues in his letters. The idea is absent in Mark and Luke and contradicted in Matthew numerous times ([Matt 7:22](#), [Matt 11:19](#)).

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When told to believe in Jesus, the Jews then seem to demand a **sign**, which is absurd since they had already witnessed a magnificent one only a day before where Jesus fed

them with just a few loaves of bread! Not only do they demand a sign, but they demand a rather specific one; reminding Jesus of the days of Moses where bread and manna descended from heaven (Exodus 16:4). Why they would remind Jesus of such a miracle is unclear, since it seems rather irrelevant in the discussion. Rather, it is likely to be the words of the author himself who then uses the same miracle as a platform to launch into how Jesus is the bread of life.

[1363] Many Christians will argue that the saying that Jesus is the **bread of life** points to his divinity, if Jesus did say the above, we have to look at the context: Jesus explains that it was not a miracle of Moses which caused the bread to come from heaven, but was from God Himself. He explains that the real bread that comes from heaven is not the physical bread which descends and feeds people, but rather it is bread which gives life to the people. This **bread** is Jesus, not Jesus himself but rather his message, revelations and teachings. Those coming to him will never hunger and those believing in him will never thirst. The message is metaphorical, and is not to be understood literally, much like the message given to the Samaritan woman in Chapter 4.

The allegory is not new to Jewish thought and interpretation: “Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold thy manna from their mouths, and gavest them water for their thirst” (Neh 9:20). Philo, the first century Jewish philosopher, interpreted the passage allegorically, having manna refer to wisdom. But this is very unlikely to have been known by the author John who simply portrayed the Jews to be completely ignorant and like the Samaritan woman, understood Jesus literally.

Having said all the above, it is equally likely that these are the words of the author John, as already explained in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this work, John’s Gospel was written much later and is a highly evolved work. The image of Jesus is very different. If this saying was claim to divinity, the question which has to be asked is why the other sources didn’t mention it? If Jesus claimed to be the Bread of Life, why didn’t Mark write it? Why didn’t Matthew? What about Luke? What about the Q source? What about the other traditions which Matthew had access to (known as M)? What about the other traditions which Luke had access to (known as L)? Why do none of these sources mention this very important point? It just proves the evolution of the position of Jesus.

[1364] Verses 36-40 are eschatological, meaning a discourse on the end of days. Jesus descended from heaven is a phrase not to be taken literally as it is stated rather bluntly in the other gospels that Jesus was born of Mary in this very world. The meaning would be that Jesus was appointed the Messiah from heaven. For the first time in the gospels, the concept that Jesus would raise people on the last day is introduced (verse 40). The idea that the Messiah would judge the sinners when he comes was familiar in some Jewish circles (see under Mark 1:1), but placing the role of the physical resurrection of the dead on the Messiah was something new and was never expected by any Jew.

[1365] Jeremiah 31:34.

[1366] Like many of the discourses between Jesus and the Jews, the former often speaks in parables and allegorically, and the latter always seem to interpret his sayings literally. The above is no exception; whilst proclaiming that he has descended from heaven, the Jews take this literally and find fault with it, since they know his parents!

In John’s Gospel, Jesus’ human identity is never spoken of; it is always his divine nature that is emphasised. Jesus rebukes them for their grumbling, and tells them that no one comes to him except those who are drawn from God. The words that he will raise him on the last day are repeated, thus pointing to the author wanting to stress the importance of the concept. Verse 45 explains what is meant by people being drawn by God; that after hearing and learning from Him, they then come to Jesus. Thus all have the possibility of hearing and learning and therefore being drawn in by God.

Verse 46 points out that not everyone has seen God, but only those who are from him, i.e. Prophets. Verse 47 stresses the importance of faith, that Jesus is the bread of life (verse 48). The fathers of the Jews (and not Jesus’ it seems) ate the bread in the past, but they died; however, the bread offered by Jesus will give them eternal life. Does that

mean that they will not die? According to a similar discussion (11:25), they will. But he is referring to the afterlife, in that in the real life they will not die but will live forever.

[1367] Important Words

αὐτοῦ (*auto*) – Pronoun, genitive singular, masculine of αὐτός (*autos*) meaning: *Him*. The author is stressing the fact that Jesus is the bread.

[1368] Verse 50 illustrates that it is Jesus who is the bread, which has descended from heaven, and that whoever eats of **him** may never die. While it was argued in this commentary that the bread was Jesus' revelations and teaching, the above has Jesus speak of the bread as himself, as his own flesh, reminding the readers of the Eucharist (Last Supper, Mark 14:22-25). Thus the question arises as to what is the bread of life? Jesus' teaching or Jesus himself? It should be noted that even the early Church Fathers disagreed on this: Origen, Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria all opted for the allegorical interpretation, in that the bread was Jesus' teachings and nothing to do with the Eucharist; whilst others like Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa chose the Eucharistic interpretation.

The answer probably lies in both, that the sayings of Jesus begin with descriptions of the bread referring to Jesus' teachings and revelations; verse 35 directly talks about those coming to Jesus and **believing** in Jesus will never die. But later (verses 51-58) the discourse moves onto the Eucharistic view; the bread becomes Jesus himself, which may have been another tradition attached to the earlier discourse. The reader will notice the repetition of **I am the bread of life** in verse 51. Much of the earlier section is again duplicated, but this time the emphasis is all on eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus, whilst earlier it was about believing Jesus; this can be seen below:

Verse 51: Jesus repeats he is the bread of life and those who *eat* him will have eternal life.

Verses 47 and 48: Jesus says that he is the bread of life and those *believing* will have eternal life.

Verse 52: the Jews again grumble and complain taking his saying literally.

Verse 42: the Jews grumble and complain taking his saying literally.

Verse 53: unless they *eat* his flesh and drink his blood, they will not have life in themselves.

Verse 33: the bread of life gives life to the world.

Verse 54: the one *eating* his flesh and *drinking* his blood has eternal life and Jesus will raise them on the last day.

Verse 39: Jesus is sent and he will raise them on the last day.

Verse 58: this is the bread, descended from heaven, it is different from the bread given to the Jews' fathers, since they ate and died.

Verses 50 and 49: this is the bread, descended from heaven, not the same as the manna their fathers ate in the wilderness and died.

As can be seen above, the second Eucharistic section is a doublet of the first section, but the difference being not on belief, but rather on the physical eating and drinking of Jesus' flesh and blood, which was most likely modelled from the Eucharist itself; see Mark 14:22-25: The Last Supper.

[1369] Important Words

αὐτοῦ (*autou*) – Pronoun, genitive singular, masculine of αὐτός (*autos*) meaning: *he*. Since the pronoun is in the masculine, I have translated it as *him* rather than *it* as the WEB

does.

[1370] After Jesus teaches the people about the Bread of Life, some of his disciples who were part of the audience in the passage, heard the teaching; that Jesus is the bread of life having come down from heaven (verse 50), and found it difficult to understand and accept. They have difficulty in listening to the teaching, no mention is made of the action of *eating* the flesh of Jesus, and as such the disciples seem to be complaining about the teaching in the first section of the *Bread of Life* passage, i.e. verses 35-50.

Jesus notices their discomfort and asks if the teaching is causing them to stumble. He asks them what they would do if they saw the son of man ascending to where he was before. The term *son of man* would remind the readers of the heavenly being in Dan 7:13 (see under [Mark 2:10](#) for more details on the phrase and the possible misinterpretation by the Church of Dan 7). There exists a parallel in the above teaching in the Discourse with Nicodemus (Chapter 26), where Nicodemus is unable to understand how one is born from above or from water and spirit. Jesus replies much in the same way as the reply above, that it is the heavenly son of man who is able to give the spirit (verse 63).

Verse 64 is a clear editorial comment made by the author who portrays Jesus as already knowing full well that many of his disciples will leave him and one (Judas Iscariot) will even betray him, and thus clears Jesus of any charge of making a mistake, or of not knowing the future. The entire misunderstanding results in many of his disciples leaving Jesus and not following him anymore. This should be of no surprise as numerous people have left following prophets because of misunderstanding their teachings. A famous scribe of the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abdullah Ibn Sarh, is said to have left Islam for disbelieving in the revelations of the Holy Prophet, but he later repented and became a good Muslim.

[1371] Textual Variant

The above reading is correct according to the earliest manuscripts, such as P⁷⁵, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Young manuscripts and the Received Text from which the KJV is based read: "*We have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" This later reading is an obvious assimilation of Matthew 16:16 where Peter declares that Jesus was the Christ (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.257).

[1372] Unlike the Synoptics ([Mark 8:27-30](#), [Matthew 16:13-20](#) and [Luke 9:18-21](#)), where Jesus asks the disciples who the people say he is, and they (especially Peter) reply with the above. In John's Gospel, Simon is named Peter by Jesus the first time they meet (1:42). In the above narration, Peter does not declare Jesus to be the Christ, but rather the **holy one of God**; this having occurred after numerous followers of Jesus leave him due to his difficult teachings about the *bread of life*. This is the first time in John's Gospel where Jesus turns to his disciples in private and asks them for their opinion. Peter acts as the spokesman and tells Jesus what they think, and instead of acknowledging his response as he does in Matthew, Jesus is critical and gives a kind of pointless reply: he says that they did not choose Jesus, but it was he who chose them, and among them also is a devil, referring to Judas. What this has got to do with Peter's reply and Jesus' original question is very uncertain.

[1373] Jesus is wandering in Galilee and shows his uneasiness about travelling to Judea since he knows that the Jews want to kill him (John 5:18).

[1374] The **Festival of Booths** or Tabernacles was one of the festivals which the Jews celebrated in remembrance of the fragile dwellings in which their ancestors lived during the forty years in the wilderness. The Old Testament book of Zechariah speaks of this festival and mentions the coming of the future Jewish King (maybe Messiah) to Jerusalem on an ass (9:9). He will open the fountain for the house of David (13:1) where the living waters will then flow out of Jerusalem (14:8), after which all the nations will come to Jerusalem to celebrate this festival as well.

[1375] In verses 3 and 4 the brothers of Jesus urge him to leave Galilee and go to Judea and to show himself, for they themselves are aware that he performs miracles, but for

some reason or another, according to the author they still disbelieve in Jesus.

[1376] Jesus replies that his time has not yet come, implying that his time (the time of atoning for the sins of mankind by dying on the cross) has not yet come and it is for this reason that he does not wish to go to Jerusalem. The world does not hate his brothers, since most likely they themselves are worldly people, unlike Jesus who is heavenly and thus is all aware of the evil works of the people of the world. Jesus then tells them to go off themselves to the festival, while he wishes to remain behind, but surprisingly he changes his mind in the next chapter and goes off to Jerusalem anyway.

The entire account is absurd and without doubt is the creation of the author himself. His depiction of the brothers of Jesus being disbelievers and hostile to Jesus is completely unfounded and goes against basic historical facts: James the brother of Jesus headed the Jerusalem Church after Jesus; in essence James was the Supreme Head of the Christian Church after Jesus (see under [Mark 6:3](#) for a detailed account of him). The New Testament letter of Jude is also traditionally attributed to another brother of Jesus. How could it be possible that two brothers of Jesus believed in him during his ministry only to become leading figures after his supposed death?

Many Christians argue that James became a believer *after* witnessing the resurrection, yet this, too, cannot be the case. It would be absurd to think that a person who disbelieved in Jesus all his life, but then suddenly believed in him after witnessing the event, would become leader of the Church as opposed to those disciples who followed Jesus for years, abandoning their families for Jesus and following him wherever he went. As noted in Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, the author of this gospel is often referred to as a *super Pauline*, in that he was a devoted follower of Paul and thus saw the Jewish Christians, the Petrites, as the enemy. And who headed the Petrites? It was James, the brother of Jesus and head of the Jerusalem Church. Thus the above account is simply an attack on him, deriding the opposition and attempting to convince his readers that their leader was a disbeliever and thus would not know the true message.

Likewise, the comments that his time has not yet come, implying his death and resurrection, are again the words of the author, since as will be shown later in this book, Jesus never expected to go to Jerusalem to die.

[1377] This passage has caused numerous difficulties for Christians, for verse 10 directly contradicts verse 8 above, in which Jesus is very adamant that he will *not go up* to Jerusalem, since his time has not yet come. But he seems to change his mind later and goes along anyway. Since it has already been argued that passages 1 to 8 are pure fabrication and the invention of the author of the gospel, verses 10 to 13 cause no difficulties. As opposed to going in the caravan with his family, Jesus may have thought it best to go a little later and more privately, for he did not want to make his entrance public and thus gain the attention of the ruling priests.

Some Jews may have already heard that he claimed to be the Messiah, and were eagerly awaiting him to see if he would finally make the claim openly. However, there seems to be a split among the Jewish population regarding him; some think of him as a good man, whilst others think he leads the multitudes astray. Either way, they do not wish to make this the main subject of their visit; fearing the ruling Jewish parties, they attempt to keep the discussions quiet and private.

[1378] About halfway through the festival, Jesus goes up into the Temple and starts to **teach**. The author has no interest in the Jewish festival and as such passes over it, coming up to the point where Jesus makes a significant impact and preaches in the Temple.

[1379] This verse does not mean that the audience were surprised that Jesus had no learning or did not know the Torah well, since throughout the gospels he is shown to excel in interpreting the Torah and is shown to have extensive knowledge of the Torah as well. The point being made is that he was taught differently; he had not learned the Pharisaic way, from a teacher or authority, but rather would have learnt much from his parents, perhaps even his uncle, the prophet Zechariah and later when he grew older

would have learnt much himself and from God Himself as verse 16 shows. For further details, see under [Mark 1:27](#).

[1380] Jesus advises his audience (verse 17) that anyone who is genuine and intends to do the will of God will know that his teachings are from God Himself. It can be argued that this may be somewhat subjective, but at the same time, throughout history, when a prophet of God does come, his interpretation of scriptures will differ significantly from the leading scholars of his time, which no doubt would have become corrupted without Divine guidance. Another test of a genuine teaching is outlined in verse 18, that when a teaching is not from God, the teacher will attribute it to himself and do it for his own glory.

[1381] This verse has caused difficulties for many Christians, Jesus states the obvious; in that Moses gave the Jews the Torah, something which none of the Jews would have denied. But then, how do they not follow the Torah? Some scholars have argued that they did not follow the Sabbath commandment properly, in that they did not want Jesus to heal the crippled man mentioned a few verses later. But the most likely answer is in the second part of the verse; that the Jews wanted to kill the man, a clear violation of the Torah! The response of the crowd is rather puzzling; they almost laugh at Jesus, saying that he is demon-possessed (implying he is crazy), and deny the charge that they want to kill him, only to be contradicted by some a little later in verse 25. However, it may also be due to the fact that this is a different crowd compared to the ones who did want to kill him back in 5:18.

[1382] In verses 22 and 24 Jesus poses a powerful argument in favour of healing on the Sabbath. Circumcision, which in fact did not come from Moses but from the prophet Abraham (the fathers) is ordained for the Jews, and was generally performed on the eighth day after the birth of a child. If this day so happened to fall upon the Sabbath, it was still performed and thus may be considered as work and thus a violation of the strict interpretation of the Sabbath Laws. This argument is also echoed by later Rabbis: "If the Sabbath has to take second place in the case of circumcision, which involves only one member of the body, how much more is the case with respect to the saving of life?" (Sanh. 132 a). Jesus ends with a final admonition; not to judge by simple appearance but with righteous judgement.

[1383] This next section of the narrative moves off the Sabbath controversy and moves on to the person of Jesus. Some of the residents of Jerusalem come and see Jesus teaching in the Synagogue (verse 25). They are likely those who were linked to the crowd who wanted to kill Jesus back in 5:18, or at least knew of some plans by the Jewish priests of an attempt to kill Jesus. They are somewhat surprised that he is preaching openly in the Temple and the Jewish priests who earlier wanted him dead do nothing about it. They question each other, and wonder whether the Jewish priests have had a change of heart; maybe they realise that he is in fact the Christ!

[1384] In this verse the same Jews, whilst contemplating whether Jesus is really the Christ or not, begin to question amongst themselves. Some of them then realise that it cannot be the case, since they know where Jesus is from, in contrast to some of the beliefs that the Messiah would be hidden and no one would know where he comes from. It is recorded in the Parables of Enoch that the Messiah is hidden and will be revealed to the elect at the right time (1 Enoch 62:7-9). The concept of the *hidden Messiah* is also present in the Talmud:

"Three things come unawares: the Messiah, a found article, and the scorpion" (Sanh. 97a. in Scholem 1971:11).

"It is not possible to tell the time when the Messiah will be revealed. If Israel would repent even for a single day, they would be instantly redeemed and the Son of David would instantly come, for it says in Psalms 95;7: 'Today if you will listen to his voice'" (Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 25:16).

Such views were probably held by some Jews at the time of Jesus who argued the above.

[1385] Hearing their discourse, and naturally upset at their misguidance, Jesus cries out and defends himself. He dismisses the concept of the hidden Messiah and argues that many people do know him and know of his good character, and that he would not be lying about his teachings and the origins of his teachings; that they are from God. A verse from the Holy Quran is related to the above saying:

“Say: ‘If Allah had so willed I should not have recited it to you, nor would I have made it known to you, indeed I have stayed amongst you a lifetime before this, Will you not think?’” (10:17).

[1386] Important Words

The question of the crowds, those who believed in Jesus begins with μή, a negative adverb. The question is a slanted question, which implies that the questioners asking a question are in fact expecting a negative response, i.e. they are expecting the answer to be *No* as the above translation shows.

Commentary

Again, some of the Jews then thought that it would be best to arrest Jesus again, yet according to the author, none were able to lay their hands on him, since his time had not yet come (verse 30), implying that it was not time for him to die. Yet, the very next verse explains the reason far better. Many of the Jews did in fact believe that he was the Messiah, and if any would lay hands on him to arrest him, they would come to his defence; arguments and fights would ensue, perhaps an outright riot, which would then have led the Romans to intervene which would have been disastrous for the Jews.

[1387] Important Words

The same slanted question is asked in this verse, see the note above.

[1388] In verses 32-36 the Pharisees and the chief priests hear the crowds murmuring these things concerning Jesus and plan to have him arrested. This prompts Jesus to reply in verse 33, that he is to remain among them a little longer, but will soon depart from them. Perhaps sensing that the leading Jews would still not believe, Jesus may well have begun to realise that it was time to move on, before he gets into serious trouble with them, which sadly did happen a little later.

Jesus probably thought it would be best to leave these Jews and travel elsewhere, primarily to the other Jews who would have lived in the Diaspora. The crowds are not far off in their understanding of where he wishes to go; he does not wish to travel west to the Greeks, but rather East to the remaining Jews outside of Judea.

[1389] The final three verses jump to the end of the festival. In order to understand Jesus' words in verse 37, a little background of the Feast of Tabernacles is required (see under [John 7:2](#) for the basic outline). Early in the morning on each of the days, the priest would go out to the pool of Siloam where he filled a large golden vessel with water from the pool. He was followed by many crowds who sang songs and played music. The vessel with the water was brought back to the Temple, where the water was then poured into silver bowls, along with wine and brought to the altar.

It is in the above context that Jesus would have cried out what he did in verse 37, that he was in fact the source of the living water as opposed to the water from the pool of Siloam, and that if anyone wished to drink the living water, they were to come to him; see under [John 4:15](#) for the interpretation of **living water**.

The exact passage or verse John is quoting in verse 38 is uncertain, for no Old Testament verse fits this quotation perfectly, and thus some Christians have often had to find ingenious ways of tracking it down, often finding similar verses. The most common verses argued are: Isa 58:11: “And the LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your

desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not"; Proverbs 18:4: "The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream"; and even Proverbs 5:15: "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well". As can be seen, none of these verses are a direct match, or can even be argued as being similar! Thus it is likely that the verse above does not originate from Jesus, but was most likely placed in his mouth by an author who was not very well versed in the Old Testament.

The final verse discusses the spirit, that being the Holy Spirit, which according to the author, John, was given to the disciples immediately after the 'resurrection' (20:22), but before his supposed ascension. However, according to the author of the Acts of the Apostles it was given to the disciples after Jesus had left them and ascended into Heaven (Acts 2).

[1390] After hearing the words of Jesus, the crowds become divided. Some of them think Jesus is the Prophet who was to come; this is in reference to Deut 18:18 (see under [John 1:21](#) for more details on the identity of this Prophet).

[1391]

Important Words

This again is a slanted question, see under verse 31 for details.

Commentary

Others think Jesus to be the Messiah, and yet another group completely reject Jesus; the grounds of their rejection being Jesus' origin, as the Galileans were not very well known for their Jewish piety (see under [Luke 1:26](#) for more information).

[1392] Another reason for rejection is that according to some Jewish traditions, the Messiah would be born in the home town of David and be among his descendants; see under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details on the signs and expectations of the Messiah among Jews living in the time of Jesus. However, it should be noted that according to Matthew Chapter 2, Jesus was in fact born in Bethlehem and that the Jews in Jerusalem were aware of this, since they, too, were all *troubled* by this (Matthew 2:3). Yet, in the above they seem to be completely ignorant of the fact; granted, the Jews at the time of Jesus' birth and his adulthood would be different, however, at least some should have been aware of Jesus' birth if they were to reject him purely on those grounds.

[1393] Some of the Jews did actually want to arrest Jesus, but they were prevented from doing so, since many of the crowd did believe in him and had the former group tried anything, arguments and even fights would have broken out threatening the peace of the entire festival.

[1394] The officers spoken of above were dispatched by the Pharisees in verse 32; they returned empty handed, for they were unable to arrest Jesus for fear of his followers and those believing in him. Obviously, the Pharisees were incensed and demanded an explanation. The reply of the officers implies that they, too, ended up believing in Jesus, yet this goes against verse 44 in which some people (assuming the officers, unless some of the Jews wanted to perform a civilian arrest) still wanted to arrest Jesus. Either way, the Pharisees were shocked at the officers' belief and asked them if any of the leaders believed in Jesus. The answer was obviously in the negative, implying that if Jesus was in fact the Messiah, then the leaders and ruling class would have definitely accepted him. Those who did accept Jesus from among the crowd knew nothing; they did not know the Law and were thus cursed.

[1395] But one member from among the leaders does believe in Jesus and raises an important objection. Nicodemus is brought back into the picture after being introduced in John 3. He raises the important objection that the Law cannot condemn a man without a hearing. He may have had Deut 1:16 in mind: "And I charged your judges at that time,

“Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien that is with him.” In turn, the Pharisees, instead of agreeing with his logical and rightful objection turn on him and accuse him of being a Galilean, i.e. a follower of Jesus. They advise him again to search the scriptures and see whether any prophet has ever risen in Galilee, again showing their serious distrust and dislike of Galileans.

[1396] Textual Variant

The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not contain the above passage, namely P39, P66, P75, Codex Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Syriac gospels. The passage is clearly a later addition, coming from an oral tradition and does not belong to the Gospel of John (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.258).

The story is not present in any pre-fifth century manuscript and it is relatively unanimous amongst Textual critics that it was not part of the original text of John. There are a number of Greek words in the text which have never been used elsewhere in the gospel, and its writing style is different from the rest.

Commentary

Although the above passage is not considered to be part of the original Gospel of John and was inserted centuries later, it may still be worth commenting on it. The next day whilst teaching in the Temple, a **woman** caught in **adultery** is brought over to Jesus for him to pass judgement. Why the man is not brought as well is not explained in the text. The Pharisees seem to do this to test Jesus, since according to John 18:31 the Jewish council (Sanhedrin) were not permitted to pass any executions themselves; that right was only for the Romans. Therefore the Pharisees wished to trap Jesus; if he ordered her to be let go, then he would be seen as a Jew not following the Torah Law and would lose his credibility as a Jewish teacher in the Temple, and if he passed judgement on the woman and ordered her execution, he would get into trouble with the Roman authorities. Thus the above is similar to the testing in Mark 12:13-17: On Paying Tribute to Caesar.

However, there are a number of difficulties with the passage: the first being the absence of the man caught committing the crime with her, as he seems to get off scot free; another being the condoning of adultery by Jesus, or at least the fact that he turns a blind eye to it, neither of which match up with his strictness and high standards in other parts of the gospels. Lastly, Jesus also seems to be condemning the very act of judging; since no judge in the world is without sin, they are thus unable to pass judgement on anyone, which in turn would create havoc in the world.

[1397] The above text would have continued and is still related to the Festival of Booths/Tabernacles. Earlier in 7:37-38 Jesus speaks of giving people living water, which was related to the water collected in the pool of Siloam. Now Jesus claims to be the light of the world; if Jesus did claim to be so, then this is linked to the text of Zechariah, as in Chapter 14 verse 7 it reads: “And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the LORD), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light.” This may have prompted Jesus to speak out and claim to be the **light of the world**. Either way, like much of his teaching e.g. him being living water, this is to be interpreted allegorically. Jesus is the light, i.e. his teachings provide light to anyone who abides by them and will light that person’s way in this world of darkness. If anyone wishes to attain salvation and find God in the world, where darkness prevails, they require some sort of light, and following Jesus would give them just that, enabling them to seek out God, lighting up their own lives.

Having said all the above, it is equally likely that these are the words of the author John, as already explained in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this work, John’s Gospel was written much later and is a highly evolved work. The image of Jesus is very different. If this saying was a claim to divinity, the question which has to be asked is why the other sources didn’t mention it? If Jesus claimed to be the **light of the world**, why didn’t Mark write it? Why didn’t Matthew? In fact, Matthew records Jesus saying that his disciples are the light! (see under Matthew 5:14). What about Luke? What about the Q source? What about the other traditions which Matthew had access to (known as M)? What about the other traditions which Luke had access to (known as L)? Why do none of these sources mention this very important point? It just proves the

evolution of the position of Jesus.

[1398] Perhaps a little weary of the long discourses and the vagueness of Jesus, the Pharisees reject his claim and accuse him of lying. Since “no man can give evidence for himself” (Mishnah Kethuboth 2:9).

[1399] Again, this is a difficult verse, where Jesus attacks his opponents for judging by the flesh, i.e. judging people by worldly laws, which may seem odd since the Pharisees would have judged people via the Torah Law which was believed to be Divine. Jesus further retorts that he himself judges no one, but this may not really be the case, as later in John’s Gospel Jesus states rather explicitly that: “but all judgement He has given to the son” (5:22) and later in 9:39: “In judgement I came into this world”. It is likely that the above passage is correct, in that Jesus did claim not to judge anyone, and the idea and concept that judgement will be passed over to the son/Messiah was a common Jewish idea which John may have inherited when writing his gospel (see under [Mark 1:1](#) for more details).

[1400] John has Jesus speak to the Jews and when referring to the Divine Torah Law, refers to it as *your* Law, as though disassociating himself from it. This is not the first time Jesus does so in John’s Gospel, In John 7:19 Jesus asks the Jews: “Did not Moses give *you* the Law?” Again in John 10:34 “Is it not written in *your* Law?”. This is surprising since in the other gospels, particularly in Matthew, Jesus has the utmost respect and loyalty for the Law, see [Matthew 5:17-20](#) and [Matthew 19:16-22](#).

[1401] To support himself, Jesus proclaims that he is not alone in his **testimony**, nor does he do so on his own, but his Father, i.e. God also testifies him, which makes two and is in accordance with the Torah Law. However, such an argument is relatively subjective and will in essence make a mockery of the Torah command that two people are required to bear witness, since any one man will thus be able to say that God is the second person, nulling that commandment.

[1402] Confused over his words, the Jews ask for clarification and ask him where his father is. Instead of answering the question, the Johannine Jesus (rather typically) states again that they do not know him or his father, which may be quite obvious since they ask him where his father is. Either way, the replies of Jesus are pointless and border on arrogance and thus must be attributed to the author of the gospel and not the humble prophet of Israel.

[1403] The above discussion seems to have taken place in the treasury. The author again clarifies that no one was able to arrest him, since his hour had not yet come, this being the third time the author makes the point, but as already explained above (under 7:31) the words are nonsense and no one was able to arrest Jesus due to fear of fights and potential riots.

[1404] This is now the third time the Johannine Jesus goes on about where he will go and that they cannot come along as well. The sheer number of repetitions indicates that it could not have come from Jesus, as it would have simply sounded absurd, nor does it make any sense whatsoever. The author of the gospel is trying to convince his readers that Jesus is speaking about his death; that is the place where he will go, but how is it that his audience cannot go there as well? Surely they, too, will die. Yet, if the author is speaking about Jesus going to the Father, i.e. to God, then that is a different matter; the saying would then mean that Jesus is condemning these people to eternal punishment and damnation.

[1405] Understandably, if Jesus was repeating himself over and over, the Jews would have got relatively confused over the matter and would have asked: ‘Is he going to kill himself?’ This, in essence is a correct assumption, since Jesus does go later, according to the Gospel of John, to kill himself on the cross.

[1406] This saying of Jesus, may well have originated from him, since it contains a strong element of truth, but it is very unlikely to have been spoken in the above context. Jesus was most likely teaching his disciples privately when speaking the above words, or at least warning them. It is very true that prophets and Godly people do not belong to the world, and it is for this reason that the world hates them and opposes them. The Godly belong to the next life, to Heaven, and are bestowed heavenly bounties; whilst men of this world are given worldly bounties, which suffice them and make them happy.

[1407] Important Words

ἐγὼ εἰμι (ego aimee) – Literally *I am*. But in the context, it is better to translate as above. See John 8:58 in “Before Abraham was, I am” for details of the phrase.

[1408] The above verse again must be the words of the author and not of Jesus, as Jesus never did speak to them about dying for their sins and this is the first time that the reader of John's Gospel is in fact hearing of it. The fact that the Jews completely miss the point and do not ask Jesus about such an alien concept is further proof that it could not have originated from Jesus.

The author is also playing with words, as shown in the Important Words section, the author has Jesus refer to himself as ἐγὼ εἰμι (ego aimee) which according to some scholars is a play on the divine name of the Jewish God, Yahweh (see John 8:48-59 for more details on this phrase). If Jesus did in fact use those words, or at least the divine name in Aramaic, he would very likely have been stoned for blasphemy. Furthermore, the above in verse 24 indicates that the Jews must believe in his *divinity* to be saved and not in the resurrection. All in all, there are too many problems with the above text and therefore it can be safely concluded that, much like the whole discourse, they cannot be the words of Jesus.

[1409] Like much of the discourse, the Jews completely misunderstand what the Johannine Jesus is saying, and who can blame them?

[1410] Earlier in verse 15, Jesus proclaims that he judges no one, yet in the above verse he has much to say concerning them and **judging** them. The latter part of the verse indicates Jesus' subordinate status; he only proclaims what he hears from God, thus directly contradicting the interpretation of verse 24 where Jesus is claiming to be divine and God.

[1411] Again, the Jews fail to understand what Jesus is talking about. Verses 28 and 29 cannot be attributed to Jesus and must be the words of the author himself. They assume again that Jesus will be crucified and die for the sins of mankind, the statement that they (the Jews) will know that he is divine once they crucify him is absurd, since no Jew readily accepted Jesus after he was crucified, and why would they believe in a condemned criminal? The verses are there to convince the readers that the plan to go and die was always so from the beginning, but the actions of Jesus and the events which unfold towards the end of his life in Jerusalem show the contrary, as is shown later in this book.

[1412] It is quite surprising that many of the Jews believed in Jesus after the previous discourse, even though he has not said anything new and his words are cloaked with a veil so to speak, in that it is all very mystical. Furthermore, no previous prophet of the Old Testament ever spoke as the Johannine Jesus above does, nor in fact do the Synoptic (first three) gospels portray Jesus as the above does. However, later in the conversations, these Jews clearly disbelieve in Jesus; see verses 33 and 37 where they even try to kill him.

[1413] From this verse, the readers are convinced that the audience of Jesus are not free of sin; they are still a sinful people, and only if they abide in the words of Jesus, i.e. follow his teachings will they truly be free. Jesus preached the ‘truth’ in the above, emphasising the speaking of truth and not lying. Possessing the quality of truthfulness is strongly emphasised within Islam as well: The Holy Quran contains more explicit commands to tell the truth than any other Holy book, the hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet)

contains many examples of the importance of speaking the truth and it is the second condition of Bait (pledge to join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community) as outlined by the Promised Messiah: "That he/she shall keep away from falsehood...".

[1414] Just as before, the Jews completely misunderstand Jesus and claim that they have never been slaves to anyone in the political sense. Yet, even this claim is ill-founded, for the Egyptians, Babylonians and even the Romans had enslaved the Jews in their history. The depiction of the Jews is poor and borders on stupidity, and as such it is highly likely that these are all the words of the author John and not of Jesus and the Jews.

[1415] This verse is out of place; earlier the Johannine Jesus is speaking of being a slave to sin, but now this verse speaks of different levels in the household; the slave and the son, which seem to be linked or part of a different parable of Jesus. The author probably saw the discussion on slaves and son in verse 36 and inserted this parable.

[1416] This verse is odd; Jesus seems to be accusing those who believed in him (verse 30) that they wish to kill him. Either Jesus is being grossly unfair, or more likely the entire discourse is the words of the author of the gospel, who seems to have been chopping and changing his sources without realising the glaring contradictions he is making.

[1417] In verse 38 Jesus tells them to do what they hear or have heard from the Father, but here in this verse the Jews seem to deny knowing this Father and want nothing to do with Him. Instead, they point out that Abraham is their father. To this, Jesus retorts if they were in fact Abraham's children, then they would do the works of Abraham, which does not include trying to kill the Messiah (verse 40)!

[1418] Jesus sarcastically replies to the Jews, and tells them that they are doing the works of their father. It seems that the Jews pick up on Jesus' hint that they are the devil's children as verse 44 points out, or it is more likely that the author simply jumped the gun and had the Jews speak and defend themselves against the allegation. Either way, the Jews retort at Jesus and make an allegation against him; that he was born of fornication which seemed to have been a critical point in attacks on the early Church; the allegation is repeated in Acts of Pilate 2:3.

[1419] Jesus here denies the Jews that their father is Abraham, rather it is the devil, since they do the will of the devil; the primary action being that they wish to kill Jesus and the devil, too, was a murderer from the beginning. The reference to the devil being a **murderer** from the beginning is probably linked to the murder of Abel by Cain, who was likely inspired by the devil. Like their father, namely the devil who desired to kill Abel, the Jews follow him in their desire to kill Jesus. The point about the devil being a liar is also linked to the early Genesis account, where the devil appeared as a servant and deceived Adam and Eve through lies.

[1420] As explained above, Jesus is actually addressing the very Jews who believed in him (verse 31)!

[1421] No one is able to **convict** Jesus, for he was without sin; such a concept is also attested in Hebrews 4:15, which Islamically is not incorrect. The only difference is that within Islam, *all* prophets are sinless as opposed to both Judaism and Christianity, which discuss and attest to the absurd ideas that certain prophets, particularly in the Old Testament, committed horrendous sins, which the Holy Quran contradicts.

For example the Bible states that prophet Adam disobeyed God (Romans 5:12 and Genesis 3), whilst the Holy Quran states that:

"And indeed We made a covenant with Adam from before and he forgot, and We found not in him no resolve [to disobey us]." (20:116).

The Bible states that Prophet Abraham lied (Genesis 20:2) while the Quran corrects this allegation by calling him a “truthful Prophet” (19:42). Prophet Solomon is spoken of committing idolatry (1 Kings 12:5), whilst again the Quran clarifies this by reinforcing his innocence and stating that “Solomon did not disbelieve” (2:103). All other ‘sins’ of the prophets spoken of in the Old Testament are completely omitted by the Holy Quran.

[1422] The discourse continues; rather than addressing anything of what Jesus says, the Jews (those who supposedly believe in Jesus according to verse 31 above) simply accuse him of being a **Samaritan** and **demon-possessed**. Jesus was often accused of being demon-possessed, so the accusation is nothing new, and whenever it is made, he sharply refutes it, as he does above. But this is the first time that he is accused of being a Samaritan, and furthermore, he does not seem to deny it. This may give a hint of when and where this part of the discourse occurred. It is likely that the author John had access to some traditions which recorded this part of the discussion. Recall that Jesus was accepted by the Samaritans and lived among them (see [Chapter 4: The Discourse with the Woman of Samaria](#))? Thus this tradition must have taken place in Samaria *after* the crucifixion. He was likely to be there and arguing with some Jews, who in turn accused him of being a Samaritan, which he does not deny for fear of upsetting his hosts, the Samaritans. See comments under verse 57 for further proof that the above discourse happened *after* the crucifixion.

[1423] As explained under verse 16, there are quite a few instances where Jesus is said to judge, along with other verses where God does so. It was concluded that those passages entitling Jesus to judge are the views of the Church themselves and not of Jesus; the role of judgement being passed to the Messiah was a late Jewish concept which the Christians inherited. The above indicates that God is judge and is thus likely to be correct.

[1424] The Jews interpret Jesus’ words literally, which is clearly not the case, as with much of his teachings and sayings. He speaks allegorically, and much of his teachings should be interpreted as such, which the Jews failed to do and very sadly many Christians have failed to do so as well, e.g. interpreting the title ‘son of God’ literally, or interpreting the prophecy of the Paraclete literally (see chapters [14 and 16](#)).

[1425] Spiritually dead is what Jesus meant, not physically dead.

[1426] This is a difficult passage to interpret, since Abraham seems to have **rejoiced**, and **saw** and was **glad**, all three words being in the aorist tense, i.e. in the past tense. Many scholars have argued that John’s source may have been a mistranslation of an Aramaic text, and it should have read something similar to Matthew 13:17: “For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see and did not see, and to hear what you hear and not heard.” Or, Jesus may in fact be referring to a particular tradition where Abraham is said to have seen in a vision the history of his descendants (Midrash Rabbah 44 on Genesis 15:18).

[1427] This accusation makes little sense, since according to Church tradition, Jesus was around the age of thirty-three or so when he was crucified, yet for some reason the Jews complain that he is not yet **fifty** years old. Surely it would have made more sense and have been more damning to proclaim that Jesus was not yet *forty* years old. This did not go unnoticed by early Church interpreters either; one Church father argues that Jesus did live to at least a few years below the age of fifty:

“But, besides this, those very Jews who then disputed with the Lord Jesus Christ have most clearly indicated the same thing. For when the Lord said to them, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad,” they answered Him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?” *Now, such language is fittingly applied to one who has already passed the age of forty, without having as yet reached his fiftieth year*, yet is not far from this latter period. But to one who is only thirty years old it would unquestionably be said, “Thou art not yet forty years old.” For those who wished to convict Him of falsehood they would certainly not extend the number of His years far beyond the age which they saw He had attained; but they mentioned a period near His real age, whether they had truly ascertained this out of the entry in the public register, or simply made a conjecture from what they observed that He was above forty years old, and that He

certainly was not one of only thirty years of age. For it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that they were mistaken by twenty years, when they wished to prove Him younger than the times of Abraham" (Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book 2, Chapter 22, 6 made available on www.newadvent.org).

Linked to verses 48 and 49, the above is further proof that the discourse mentioned by John was likely to have taken place *after* the crucifixion, when Jesus was taking refuge in Samaria and was arguing with the Jews there, and it would have taken place much later, many years after the crucifixion, when he was at least in his mid-forties.

[1428] This verse has been at the centre of Christian/Muslim debates for years and has often been argued by many, if not all Christians that Jesus is directly claiming to be God. There are two primary reasons for this: he is proclaiming that he pre-existed before **Abraham**; and he is claiming to be God by saying **I AM**.

For arguments sake, had Jesus really spoken the above words, then the first point, about pre-existence; it cannot be argued that if one were to be referred to as something or someone before one's birth that it would not make him divine. For numerous prophets were consecrated and chosen before they were even born; the most obvious example being prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). There also exists an Islamic tradition where the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked: "When did you become a prophet?" He replied: "I was the seal of the prophets when Adam was between the water and the mud - before he came into existence" (Ibn Arabi, *Futūhāt*, I, 243). In like manner, Jesus was anointed before the creation of Abraham; in that Jesus was chosen by God, like all prophets were chosen, before the creation of the world.

The second point is regarding Jesus claiming to be Yahweh, but saying the words 'I AM' is linked to when Moses first meets God at the burning bush: "Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13-14).

In Hebrew, the name God is יהוה (Yahweh) meaning: *the one who is; the absolute and unchangeable one; the existing; ever-living* (F.Brown, S.Driver, C.Briggs, *The Brown Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

God spoke to him informing him that he is a Messenger to the Children of Israel. As the Children of Israel had lived with the Egyptian pagans who had multiple gods, each with its own name, the Israelites naturally picked up their customs and also believed in multiple gods. Moses anticipated the Israelites questioning him as to which god sent him. He therefore asked God His name. God's reply was simple; He did not give any name, He simply replied that He was God, and to tell the Israelites that God had sent Moses to the Israelites. He was not one of the Egyptians' man-made gods, but The God, The One God.

However, the name Yahweh is the Hebrew name. Since the Johannine text above is in Greek, the Greek for 'I am who I am' is ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (*Ego aimee ho own*) literally meaning: *I am the one being*, not to mean the *one being* as in the sole entity, but rather the one being, as in the one existing. It is the present particle of εἰμι meaning *I am*, as in *I am Mashhood*: εἰμι Mashhood.

Just from the statement ἐγώ εἰμι (*ego eimi*), numerous Christian interpreters have argued that Jesus is claiming to be divine, and not just Divine, but claiming to be The God, Yahweh Himself. Isaiah 43:10 is particularly utilised in this argument: "that you may know and believe and understand that *I am*."

Would this imply that all who state those words or utilise them are claiming to be Yahweh? Are there examples of people or other beings using these words? Yes, in John Chapter 9, verses 8-9 it states: "The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, 'Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is he'; others said, 'No, but he is like him.' He said, '*I am* ἐγώ εἰμι).'"

Most Bibles, however, do not translate it as above, but make the blind man say: *I am that man* or *I am he*. However, this is not the Greek; the Greek is Εγώ εἰμι (*Ego eimi*), the same phrase Jesus is said to have spoken. However, no one has ever suggested that the blind man above is claiming to be God. Even in the Old Testament, the phrase is used numerous times: in Judges 6:18: “Do not depart from here, I pray thee, until I come to thee, and bring out my present, and set it before thee.’ And he said, ‘I will stay (Εγώ εἰμι) till you return.’” And “So I thought I would tell you of it, and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.’ And he said, ‘I will (Εγώ εἰμι) redeem it’” (Ruth 4:4).

There is one final point of rebuttal against such an interpretation that Jesus is claiming to be Yahweh in the above verse; if the final two words are supposed to be the name of God, then an alternative translation of the verse can be: **Before Abraham, Yahweh**, which in essence makes no sense, and therefore cannot be understood so. What Jesus must have meant, perhaps in the Aramaic was that before Abraham was even born, he was proclaimed the Jewish Messiah by God. To read further into the text makes it nonsensical.

It is probably safer to assume that Jesus didn't say the above words, especially in the above context. In fact, the verse has been used by Christians throughout history as an argument that Jesus is claiming divinity. As already explained in the Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this work, John's Gospel was written much later and is a highly evolved piece work. The image of Jesus is very different. If this saying was claim to divinity, the question which has to be asked is why the other sources didn't mention it? If Jesus claimed to be God, why didn't Mark write it? Why didn't Matthew? What about Luke? What about the Q source? What about the other traditions which Matthew had access to (known as M)? What about the other traditions which Luke had access to (known as L)? Why do none of these sources mention this very important point? It just proves the evolution of the position of Jesus.

[1429] Important Words

The WEB translation adds more to the above verse: *Therefore they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus was hidden, and went out of the Temple, having gone through the middle of them, and so passed by*. These words seem to be present in the Received Text from which the KJV and WEB are based. However, they are absent from more modern Bible editions such as the RSV. Hence I have omitted them.

[1430] Although a new chapter in John's Gospel, the beginning of the verse seems to indicate that it connects to the previous 8:59 where Jesus has concealed himself and fled the Temple to prevent the Jews from stoning him. But, whilst quickly leaving he supposedly passed by a blind man. His disciples, who apparently were fleeing as well, stopped and used such an opportunity to ask Jesus about those unfortunate ones born disabled.

If the Jews in the previous chapter did not pick up stones to stone him (which they were not permitted to do anyway according to John 18:31, and the likelihood of doing so in the sacred Temple would also make the event almost impossible), then Chapter 10 can begin logically following on from Chapter 9, where Jesus along with his disciples leave the Temple peacefully and pass by a blind man. Or, if they did try to stone him as Chapter 9 ends, then the beginning of Chapter 10 is unlikely and indicates a completely different setting and follows a completely different story to that of Chapter 9.

[1431] The question asked by the disciples is difficult to answer with reference to the Old Testament alone, mainly due to inconsistencies. On one hand, the Torah states that God would not punish children for their fathers: “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin” (Deut 24:16).

On the other hand, God warns the people; “You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon

the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me" (Exodus 20:5). The disciples ask Jesus what his opinion is.

[1432]

The Johannine Jesus does not answer the question, but rather points to what the author of the gospel thinks is the reason that the poor man was born blind; so that the glory of God would be done through him. In other words, the man suffered immensely for decades just so that Jesus could visit him and cure him and thus present the works of God, but as will be shown later, these **works** of God done by Jesus seem to backfire when attempting to convince the Jews that he is the Messiah.

[1433] God sent Jesus to revive the Jews and bring them back to the original teachings of the Torah, and to aid in this mission, Jesus sought out disciples; to aid in this task. The reference to day may actually be a reference to life, whilst nothing can be done at night; i.e. when one is dead.

[1434] See under [John 8:12-20](#): "I am the Light of the World" for the interpretation of the phrase.

[1435] For details of prophets' saliva being applied to men's eyes, see under [Mark 7:31-37](#): Jesus Heals a Deaf Mute and Many Others.

[1436] Jesus takes the **mud** he made with his **saliva** and applies it to the blind man's eyes. He was then instructed to go and wash his eyes in the pool of **Siloam**, which results in him receiving his sight again. Whether the man was completely blind is not clear, nor the fact that he was born blind. The emphasis in the entire account is strongly on the fact that he was born blind, for the statement is made numerous times that he was, but these could very easily be the words and intentions of the author who wished to magnify the miracle of Jesus. Either way, there is no telling what the original condition of the man was so the reader will just have to take the sole author's account of the story.

[1437] After receiving his sight, the man returns home, where his neighbours see him and the readers are told for the first time that this man was a **beggar**, who used to sit at a certain spot and beg.

[1438] **Important Words**

ἐγώ εἰμι (*ego aimee*) – Literally meaning *I; I am*. Many Bible translations, including the WEB add the words *he*, translating the two words as *I am he*. The last two words are an interpretation of the text rather than a literal translation which was opted for above. It may also be theological, as explained by 8:58; Jesus uses the same phrase and it is often argued by Christian interpreters that Jesus is claiming to be God, yet the same cannot be applied to a blind beggar!

[1439] The man is interrogated and he re-tells the story of how Jesus healed him, although it is not clear how he knew Jesus' name.

[1440] It seems his neighbours then take the man to the **Pharisees**, although the reason for this is not at all clear. Perhaps they wished to know more about this miracle-worker who healed the man's blindness, and sought the advice of the Pharisees, or some may have recognised the name Jesus, and therefore took the man to the Pharisees for further interrogation. The readers are informed for the first time as well, that Jesus actually healed on the Sabbath.

[1441] The poor man repeats his story for the second time.

[1442] When the Pharisees hear the story, they immediately come to the conclusion that Jesus cannot be from God, for he broke the **Sabbath** command according to them. He

did so in many ways: healing life-threatening illness or injuries is permitted on the Sabbath, but the blind man's eyes were not life-threatening; according to the Mishnah (Shabbath 7:2) kneading is not permitted either on the Sabbath, and Jesus did so with his saliva and mud; and finally, according to another Jewish tradition (TabBab Abodah Zorah 28b) anointing another man's eye on the Sabbath is not permitted either. So, the Pharisees had quite a case here against Jesus. But even this does not stop a division from forming with the Jewish groups regarding Jesus, some of whom are taken in by Jesus' miracles and believe him to be from God.

[1443] Since there was a division among the group, some sought the advice of the only man there who had actually met Jesus. He immediately replies that he considers Jesus to be a prophet of God. This may be due to some of the similarities between the miracles of Jesus and some of the Old Testament prophets, notably Prophets Elijah and Elisha.

[1444] The group amongst the Jews who disbelieved in Jesus, thus (maybe encouraged by the Pharisees) seek out the man's parents to determine whether he really was blind or not, for to cast doubt on the miracle of Jesus would cast doubt on his character as well. The parents are summoned and interrogated as well.

[1445] The bewildered parents of the man inform them of only what they know; that he was born blind and that he now sees. They have no idea how he now sees, and simply tell their questioners to ask him, for he is of age, i.e. he is a grown up man.

[1446] The author of the account wishes to let his readers know the reason why the blind man's parents spoke so cautiously, even though no caution is detected; they simply tell the truth and what they can confirm. The supposed fear they held was due to the Jews already ex-communicating the Christians, or those believing that Jesus was the Messiah from their synagogues. Yet, never in any of the gospels are the readers informed that any Christians were put out, in fact this was predicted by Jesus to happen after the above statement is made; in John 16:2, Jesus predicts that this *will* happen, not that it *has* happened. The likelihood of ex-communication would only happen once it was confirmed by the Jewish leaders that Jesus was a false claimant, and up to this point, this was not confirmed, for many of the Jews still believed in Jesus. Furthermore, the leaders would have had no right to ex-communicate anyone for believing a certain person to be the Messiah. In the second century, many people acknowledged that Bar Kokhba was the Messiah but were not barred from attending any synagogue.

Thus the above saying or statement must either be entirely fabricated, or must have another context which fits; that being a *post-crucifixion saying*, where the followers of Jesus were removed from the synagogues because they believed a convicted criminal to be the Messiah. It was when the persecution of the followers of Jesus began that this order came into place and was carried out, and the persecution of his followers began after he was arrested and convicted.

[1447] The people call the blind man back, and as if they have all concluded and made up their minds, they inform him that Jesus is a sinner and is condemned. The formula, *give glory to God*, was often a formula used as testimony against someone or before a confession of the guilty (Joshua 7:19).

[1448] The man stands strong and does not seem to be intimidated by the Pharisees or the Jewish group. He does not know whether Jesus is a sinner, but all he does know is that he was blind and now can see, and that is all that matters to him for now. When asked again to repeat how it happens, he gets fed up and ridicules them, pointing out that their interest in knowing the story is bordering on admiration.

[1449] They attack back but referring to him as a disciple of Jesus, possibly due to his belief that Jesus was a prophet. They are confident and know that God spoke to them, or at least Moses, but they cannot verify whether God has spoken to Jesus and for this reason, they dismiss him as a liar.

[1450] The man's arguments seem to echo much of what Jesus has already been stating earlier in the discourse with the Jews, particularly in Chapter 8, which casts some doubt on the authenticity of the above sayings, since it may well have been the words of the author placed in the blind man's mouth. He reasons that since God does not listen to a sinner, and that never in the history of the prophets or people has anyone been healed from blindness from birth, this man must be from God and that he must be a prophet of God.

[1451] Perhaps wanting to show how the man silenced the people, the author then depicts them reviling the man. Unable to give an adequate reply, they accuse him of being born a sinner (which may be the way they interpreted his blindness from birth) and throw him out of the synagogue.

[1452] Important Words

The WEB and KJV translation reads: **Do you believe in the Son of God?** However, according to the earliest manuscripts, it is **son of man**. It is much more likely that the original reading is **son of man** which was later changed to **son of God** by a later Christian scribe (Philip Wesley Comfort, *A Commentary of the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament*, 2015, p.261).

[1453] Jesus returns to the scene and hears about what has happened to the blind man. He finds him and asks him whether he believes in the son of man (for information on the possible meanings of this title see under [Mark 2:10](#)). The blind man is either uncertain of the meaning of the phrase and asks for clarification, or (more to the author's liking) he understands the phrase to be Messianic (which it was not) and asks Jesus where the Messiah is.

[1454] Important Words

προσεκύνησεν (*prosekunaysen*) – Verb, aorist active indicative, 3rd person singular of προσκυνέω (*proskuvew*, pay homage). See note under [Matthew 2:2](#) for the correct meaning of the word.

Like the many other references throughout the gospels, the Greek word used is προσκυνέω (*proskuneo*): *from a basic sense meaning bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Some translations of the Bible state that the man *worshipped* Jesus. But this is absurd and if that is what the author meant then he, too, should stand corrected. To actually worship another individual in public in Jerusalem would have been suicidal for any Jew to do. The blind man, who seemed to know his scriptures based from his arguing with the Pharisees and Jews above would never have worshipped a man.

[1455] The Pharisees are also present, pointing further to the impossibility of the man worshipping Jesus, since they would have certainly interfered and would have definitely had him and Jesus arrested for such a crime.

[1456] Jesus begins Chapter 10 with a parable, or figure of speech (verse 6), which discusses the shady character of a thief or bandit, who instead of going through the door of the courtyard, which would no doubt be guarded by a shepherd or assistant, climbs over the wall from another place where he will enter undetected.

[1457]

By contrast, the shepherd enters boldly through the gate, for he owns the sheep and probably the assistant who guards the sheep.

[1458]

The door-keeper sees and recognises the shepherd and thus opens the door for him. And the sheep hearing his voice recognise it and follow him as he leads them out. It is uncertain whether the shepherd would have called all his sheep by individual names; certain sheep may have acquired some sort of nick-names, but it would not have been the

norm to name them all, particularly if the flock was large. Thus the saying above may either refer to some, or to illustrate the closeness of the shepherd to his sheep.

[1459]

Jesus proclaims the **parable**; none of his audience can make out what the hidden meaning is however, so an explanation is required and is as follows. It is likely that this is all that the author's source contained, and it most likely did not provide any explanation of the figure of speech, as verse 7 begins with **therefore** and introduces Jesus' speech again. Jesus' explanation is far too theological as well, speaking of him dying for his sheep and only he having authority to do so etc. This neither bears any resemblance nor has any link to the actual saying above. Thus the explanation is likely to be the words of the author himself who sought to explain the figure of speech above.

[1460]

In the above saying, Jesus is not only the shepherd, but also the door to the courtyard and sheep, i.e. if anyone were to enter his community, he would have to go through Jesus himself; only through Jesus can he enter and join the community. If he were to enter through some other means, the sheep (which symbolise the community members) would not listen to that person. People who enter the community through Jesus will find salvation and paradise.

[1461]

It is unclear who or which party represents the thief here; it cannot be the Jewish leaders, since they never did try to infiltrate the Christian ranks deceptively, rather their later tactics were simply to ex-communicate and persecute. It may have referred to some Christians who did manage to join the community at a much later date and did manage to cause numerous troubles for the Church, i.e. internal hypocrites you may say.

[1462] Jesus' position is now of the shepherd; he is the one who owns the sheep, he loves them and they love him; for he would lay down his life for the sheep, particularly in the face of danger, since he loves them. This is contrasted to the hired servant, who has no love for the sheep and in the face of any sort of danger would abandon them. In the above example the danger is laid out in the form of a wolf, which the hired servant sees and flees leaving the sheep completely defenceless. The wolf will attack, destroying some sheep and causing the rest to scatter.

[1463]

This verse is very out of place in the above explanation, and may have its origin in a completely different setting or saying.

[1464]

If this saying is true, then it refers to the other sheep (Jews) who were not part of Jesus' current flock. Jesus' followers would mainly have consisted of Jews in Galilee and Judea; these would most likely have been the remnants of the southern Israelite Kingdom centuries before who were spared the Assyrian invasion but were caught up in the Babylonian one in 587 BCE. This kingdom would have consisted mainly of the two Jewish tribes of Judah and Benjamin. While the northern kingdom which fell around 721 BCE consisted of the remaining ten tribes, these in turn were carried off by the Assyrians and later formed what many people refer to as the Diaspora, but many moved further east to Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and India. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) has spoken about these tribes and how Jesus travelled to Kashmir through Afghanistan, the entire purpose being to preach to these lost tribes of Israel (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *Jesus in India*, 2016, Chapter 4).

The above saying of Jesus in John's Gospel is most likely authentic and outlines the desire of Jesus to complete his mission to preach to all the Jews. Those Jews who were not of this fold, would be those Jews whom Jesus was referring to in the east; he desired to preach to these Jews as well and unite the Jewish people once more as one flock.

Gentiles are often argued to be the other sheep that Jesus was to call; this is often argued by Christian interpreters arguing for the case of a Gentile Mission. However, this cannot be the case, since never in Jesus' life, particularly and rather surprisingly in John's Gospel does he go out seeking Gentiles to preach to. Never does he do so, nor are the readers made aware of any Gentile joining his community. Nor does any Gentile join Jesus' community in the Synoptic (first three) gospels for that matter. Furthermore, the analogy of sheep has been used throughout the Old Testament, and it always refers to the Jews, the children of Israel. (Numbers 27:17; 2 Samuel 24:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Psalms

74:1; Psalms 78:52; Jeremiah 50:6,17; Ezekiel 34). Thus, when Jesus used the same analogy, he also would have had Jews in mind when he spoke about other sheep not in this fold.

[1465] The final two verses are very awkward and completely out of context and place. They have no relation to the sayings of Jesus in the beginning of the chapter, nor do they make much sense. The verses were most likely introduced to attempt to convince the readers that Jesus came *willingly* to the world and *willingly* to die for the sins of mankind. Yet, as will be shown later in the passion narrative, beginning with Mark 14:32-42: Gethsemane, Jesus never did willingly go to the cross, nor did he expect to. Thus the above verses were most likely the words of the author who only wished to convince his audience that Jesus' dying was all a plan, and that Jesus himself was very much part of the plan.

Furthermore, the middle part of the verse is incorrect, while it is true in the Christian belief that Jesus had the power to **lay down his life** (kill himself), he never had the power to **take it again**. It was God the Father who resurrected Jesus (Romans 6:4; Gal 1:1).

The final part of the verse is difficult, for what **commandment** did Jesus **receive from the Father**? The same commandment that he was to sacrifice himself? If that's the case, how could Jesus state that he was willing to die, when in fact it was a commandment of God? The whole passage is a mess and could not have originated from Jesus.

[1466] The author finally returns to the Jews who were listening closely to what Jesus was saying, and again the division is spoken of among them. Whilst some still maintained that Jesus was **demon-possessed**, others argued that his sayings could not have been inspired by a demon, even though many of his sayings were not understood by the majority of the crowd. However, the main point those who believe in Jesus seem to make is that a demon-possessed man is not able to perform the miracle of healing a blind man.

[1467] Jesus is still in Jerusalem when the **Feast of Dedication** occurs, which is also known as Hanukkah or the Feast of the Maccabees. It was a festival observed for eight days from the 25th of Kislev (the month of December). It actually began with Judas Maccabeus and his brothers in 165 BCE in remembrance of the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, after it had been desecrated in the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (168 BCE). Wellhausen, a famous biblical scholar suggested that the feast was originally connected with the winter solstice; hence the above in John's Gospel speaks of it occurring in winter.

[1468] Jesus enters the **Temple** again, and this time the Jews approach him and ask him to make his claim bluntly. They tell him to stop keeping them in suspense and to answer their question bluntly; if he is the Christ or Messiah to tell them plainly. This question is the focus of the entire episode.

[1469] Very much like the Johannine Jesus, he does not answer their question; instead, he informs them that he has already told them, however thus far in John's Gospel he has never mentioned explicitly that he is the Messiah. Earlier, Jesus heals a man born blind and then declares himself to be the son of God (John 9). Later in a parable, he refers to himself as a shepherd, which was at times a symbol of the future Davidic King, since David was a shepherd before he himself was declared King. Besides these ambiguous hints, nowhere else does Jesus declare that he was the Messiah as stated above. Thus, either the author John missed out the sayings of Jesus where he does speak bluntly, or (more likely) the author John is placing more words in the mouth of Jesus.

[1470] The Jews do not believe in Jesus since they are not of his sheep; this will bring the reader back to the beginning of Chapter 10, where Jesus gives the parable regarding being the Good Shepherd.

[1471] This links to verse 4 of the same chapter, where the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd and follow him.

[1472] Jesus gives them eternal life, as he does in verse 10 in the same chapter. None is able to seize them from Jesus' grasp, like the wolves seize the sheep (verse 12).

[1473] The claim that Jesus and God are one point to end goals and purpose; the purpose of prophets is in essence the purpose of God, they become so obedient to God, that they become like puppets as it were, where God is able to work through them. This interpretation is supported by Jesus' statement elsewhere where he states 'that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you' (John 14:20). If taken literally, that would make all his disciples divine also, which obviously is not the case. Sadly, numerous Christians have attempted a literal interpretation, which then causes inconsistencies with other verses such as 14:20.

[1474] Like many Christians, the Jews, too, understood Jesus' saying literally and completely misunderstood it. They pick up stones to stone him, even though it was illegal for them to execute anyone (John 18:31). However, some Jews may have let their passions flare up and wished to stone him there and then, but Jesus protests; he asks why they stone him, for which of his good works do they stone him? Their reply is that it is because of blasphemy; that he is claiming to be God.

[1475] Important Words

λυθῆναι (*luthaynai*) – Verb, aorist passive infinitive, of λυω (*luw*) meaning: *to lose; untie or set free; release; can also mean to break or do away with; with regards to scriptures, to set aside annul or invalidate* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1476] Rather than agree with their interpretation, which is also the viewpoint of many Christians, Jesus protests and begins to explain what he meant; that it was not a literal claim but rather a spiritual one, an allegorical one. He explains that in the Psalms (82:6) God proclaims that the children of Israel were 'gods' as well and that they are 'sons of the Most High', which was never interpreted literally by any Jewish group. It is in the same way that Jesus is proclaiming to be god, or the son of God. For more information on the title *son of God*, see under [Mark 1:1](#).

It should be understood and argued that had Jesus been god or the literal son of God as proclaimed by the majority of Christians, then he would not have argued against this interpretation shared by the Jews who wished to stone him. Jesus should have agreed with their interpretation and explained further why he is the literal son of God. However, he does the complete opposite and explains what the term means, and *how* he is applying the term to himself: that it was a mere title, just like how it was a title used in the Old Testament.

[1477] The Jews understood the explanation and put down their stones. However, they were still not entirely happy with Jesus and sought to arrest him instead. The account depicts him as escaping from their clutches; how he could escape them is uncertain, perhaps those who believed in him protected him from those who wished to arrest him.

[1478] After escaping the mob, Jesus departs and leaves Jerusalem. He is greeted by many Jews outside Jerusalem who readily accept and believe in him.

[1479] The author John introduces a certain man called **Lazarus**, of whom little is known. He is mentioned twice in the gospels; the first time is here and the second is in a parable of Jesus recorded in [Luke 16:19-31](#), but it does not seem that they are related. The story of Lazarus is very similar to the other stories in the gospels about Jesus raising people from the dead. Compare this story with [Mark 5:21-43](#) with regards to Jesus raising the daughter of Jairus. In both accounts a relative of an ill person comes to Jesus to heal them. In both accounts Jesus is delayed and the person dies, but Jesus then speaks some words, raises them from the dead and orders the family to take care of them.

But why is Jesus delayed? According to Mark the woman with the haemorrhage interrupts him, so by the time Jesus reaches Jairus' daughter, she is already "dead". Jesus kicks out most in the house and "resurrects" her privately, then tells the family not to tell anyone. Contrast this with John's version, where no one delays Jesus, but he does so himself with no apparent reason (verse 6 below). Some scholars have question why Jesus would want this?

"The text of Jesus' words tells us in no uncertain terms: "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe" (v. 15). For John's Gospel, Lazarus has to die so that Jesus can raise him from the dead, and convince others of who he is. As Jesus himself puts it, "This illness...is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (v. 4).

This further explains another significant difference between the accounts. In Mark, Jesus heals the girl in private, taking only her parents and three of his disciples with him. In John, Jesus makes the healing a public spectacle, with crowds looking on." (Bart Ehrman, *Is This the Same Jesus? John and the Synoptics (part 2)*, March 27, 2020, <https://ehrmanblog.org/is-this-the-same-jesus-john-and-the-synoptics-part-2/>).

This again shows the highly evolved piece of work we are dealing with; John's Gospel was written later and he wrote it to prove to his audience that Jesus was more than a human being. This gospel is packed with evolved Christian doctrine.

[1480] The author wishes to remind the readers of which **Mary** this is and links it back to the sinning woman who anointed Jesus' feet. For more information see Mark 14:3-9: The Woman with the Ointment.

[1481] The two sisters send Jesus a message; it is very brief, showing the urgency of it: The man you love (i.e. Lazarus) is ill, come quickly!

[1482] Jesus is confident that Lazarus will not die, and thus calmly says so. He also adds that the illness exists for the sole purpose that through it, **God's son** will be **glorified**. This is not the first time Jesus speaks of illnesses existing for the glory of God or himself; earlier with the man born blind, Jesus makes the same statement (see John 9:3).

[1483] Important Words

ἠγάπα (*agapa*) – Verb, imperfect active indicative, 3rd person singular of ἀγαπᾶω (*agapaw*) meaning: *love; to be loyal to; to show love or long for* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The verb is in the imperfect tense, implying a continuous action as opposed to the aorist which would imply a one-off action, such as *he loved* which the WEB translated. This translation can be interpreted that he loved but no longer does. However, the imperfect form implies that he loved in the past and keeps on loving to the present. This was most likely chosen intentionally to remove any doubts that Jesus loved the three, as the very next verse is confusing since he remained where he was for a further two days instead of hurrying to Lazarus' side.

[1484] This is a difficult verse; on the one hand Jesus receives an urgent message that one of the beloved friends is ill and that he should come quickly. The readers are then informed that Jesus loves him, yet for some reason he remains where he was for a further two days. It may be that Jesus was waiting for the command of God; or it may be linked to the intention of the author, wanting this story to be a resurrection story rather than a mere healing story.

[1485] Verses 7-10 are an insertion into the Lazarus story; there is no mention of Lazarus, the message or the sisters. The four verses are simply an account of Jesus wanting to go into Judea again, whilst the disciples opposed him. It becomes more obvious when the reader reads the narrative, which flows more smoothly without these four verses. It is likely that the author placed these verses into the above Lazarus story to link to the previous stories about the Jews in Jerusalem wanting to arrest and kill him.

Jesus responds to the questioning of the disciples with another question. Are there not twelve hours in the day? Whilst we would consider twenty-four hours to be in one day, the Jews in Jesus' time seem to have differentiated the day and night; thus there were twelve hours in the day and the remaining hours belonged to the night. If interpreted literally, the reader may think of the twisty and narrow passages in Judea and the dangers in walking these paths at night. But this seems to bear no link to the question of the disciples. Jesus is likely speaking about his work and how he must do more in the open, in light for all to see and witness. Whilst doing God's work, he does not think that he is in danger and thus would be safe from the hands of the Jews. The night is different; the readers may well have been aware that Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane at night and that Judas slipped away to the chief priests at night. Either way, it is difficult to interpret the verses without their original context.

[1486] From this verse, the Lazarus story continues. The author repeats the phrase **after that** which appeared in verse 7 above. Jesus informs his disciples that Lazarus has fallen asleep, whilst in actual fact he knew that he was dead. This is not the first time Jesus has spoken this way; in [Mark 5:39](#) Jesus claims that the little girl, whom everyone had thought was dead, was in fact sleeping.

[1487] The disciples misunderstand Jesus. They interpret his words literally and believe that Jesus was referring to some sort of sleep which Lazarus was undertaking to get better, a type of healing sleep or rest, which would result in him getting better from his illness. With this in mind, they object to Jesus travelling there to wake him; surely he needs the sleep to recover!

[1488] Jesus explains to his disciples that he is glad that he was not there, since if he were there he would have healed Lazarus, which in the eyes of the author and the readers would have been a smaller miracle than the raising of the dead. It should be noted that according to the Holy Quran, coming back from the dead is impossible and against the Laws of God (for more details see under [Luke 7:11-17](#): The Widow's Son at Nain). It should also be noted that the very next verse speaks of Thomas wanting to go and die with Lazarus, which completely ignores Jesus' awkward saying in verse 15. Thus, it is likely that the words are not of Jesus but of the author of the gospel, who wished to build up the resurrection story further.

[1489] The author wishes to assure his readers that Lazarus was definitely dead, and that his death was not a recent occurrence but one that had taken place days ago.

[1490] Important Words

σταδίων (*stadiown*) – Noun, genitive plural, neuter of σταδιον (*stadion*) meaning: a measure of distance, in length around *600 feet, or 200 yards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1491] Many of the Jews from the neighbouring cities had come to console the sisters, whose brother had just died. News of Jesus' arrival reaches the house and Martha goes out to greet him, whilst Mary was left in the house to greet the guests.

[1492] The words of Martha show both grief and trust in Jesus; had he come earlier he would have been able to heal her brother and he would have lived.

[1493] Martha has trust in Jesus, yet at the same time her faith is depicted as incomplete. She fails to understand Jesus' words in verse 23 and thinks he is referring to the day of resurrection where all will raise again.

[1494] In response to Martha's lack of understanding, Jesus makes two distinct but related claims. The first being that he is the resurrection, implying that those who believe in

Jesus, though they may die, they will rise to have eternal life. The second claim is that he is the life and that those who believe in Jesus will never die a spiritual death, but again will have eternal life.

[1495] Martha leaves Jesus and goes back to the house to inform Mary that Jesus is here and wishes to see her. In response, Mary quickly gets up and goes to Jesus, followed by many of the Jews who were consoling her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary meets Jesus she falls at his feet and weeps and repeats the lament of Martha almost word for word. It is likely that the author wishes to contrast the two sisters; whilst the former goes to Jesus and laments and then proceeds to fail to understand his words, the latter (Mary) goes to Jesus, falls at his feet, laments and then remains silent, weeping. The author depicts Mary to have more faith than Martha, which is in agreement with the Lukan portrayal of the two sisters ([Luke 10-39-42](#)).

[1496] A point about this verse, unrelated to the account is that this is the shortest verse in the New Testament, consisting of just three words in the Greek.

[1497] Some of the Jews may have heard or witnessed the miracle of Jesus healing the blind man in [Chapter 9](#), and wondered whether Jesus could have healed and saved Lazarus from his illness just as he had healed the blind man.

[1498] When Jesus comes to the tomb, he sees that the entrance of the tomb is covered by a large stone. He orders the stone to be removed, at which Martha cries out that he has been dead for four days and that removing the stone would release a **stench** from the decaying body. In turn, she is rebuked by Jesus for her lack of faith; again in contrast to her believing sister Mary, who remains silent and obedient to Jesus.

[1499] After the stone is removed, Jesus then raises his eyes and prays to God; the fact that he thanks God and speaks of God having already heard him shows that he was aware that God would listen to him now and aid in the performing of the miracle. He then cries out to Lazarus to come out, who does so bound hand and foot, along with his face. How Lazarus was able to do this is not explained and is likely to be the words of the author to aid in the shock and awe of the story.

This is not the first time Jesus raises someone from the dead; for details regarding raising the dead, see under [Luke 7:16](#). However, this story differs from the others due to the time constraint; many times in the above account, 'four days' is mentioned between Lazarus' death and supposed resurrection. The only possible explanation is that like many other verses in the account, these are likely to be the words of the author to add to the intensity and grandeur of the miracle. Without the repeated mention of four days, this miracle is just like the other miracles of raising people from the dead.

[1500] The miracle seems to have created a division among the Jews again; whilst many believed in Jesus some did not. The latter seemed to have sneaked away and informed the **Pharisees** of what Jesus was doing.

[1501] This was the reason the council of Jews wished to kill Jesus; for he preached and performed **many signs**, and thus many believed in him. He proclaimed to be the Messiah in and around Galilee and gathered many followers. If he were allowed to continue, the many people who had come from afar to the feast would also believe in him.

As already explained under [Mark 1:1](#), the Jews had certain expectations of the Messiah; in that he would be a great warrior and would free the Jews from their enemies, in this case the Romans. Thus belief that the Messiah had arrived may lead certain people, especially the Zealots, to declare war on Rome. Of course Jesus would not have permitted this, but the Jewish council were not concerned about his teachings, but more about the population's reaction to an announcement of the coming of the Messiah. The Romans

would hear that the *King of Israel* had come, and this may lead Rome to come down hard on Jerusalem and the Jews.

[1502] Caiaphas feared this, and therefore decided that it was best to destroy one man rather than having the entire nation destroyed. His calculation was cold but on some levels for the best, since he had the nation and the people in mind, and felt that one man's life was of less worth than an entire nation's. Thus his stance was purely political and not religious, but being high priest he should have taken religion more seriously and should have seen whether Jesus' claim was accurate or not. However, as explained under [Mark 1:1](#), it is likely that he along with many of the Jews interpreted the Messianic prophecies literally and thus did not believe in Jesus.

It may be worth noting and asking the question of how the author John knew what the council were discussing and what the outcome was. It is likely that his source was either from reports of Joseph of Arimathea, who was a secret disciple of Jesus, or Nicodemus, a leading religious figure who had visited Jesus at night and become his disciple. Nicodemus himself seems to have left an account of what happened at the trial; a gospel which also bears the name of 'Acts of Pilate'. Although it has suffered various additions at the hands of later copyists, it still contains some truths.

[1503] There is no doubt that these are the words of the author, who was interpreting the sub-conscious decision made by Caiaphas. The author of the gospel firmly believed that Jesus died for the sins of mankind; that he died to save mankind. Thus he interprets the political statement of Caiaphas above to be a theological prophecy. It is obvious that Caiaphas did not have the Christian ideology of atonement and Messianic sacrifice in mind when he said the above, for such a belief that the Messiah would die and resurrect was completely unknown to the Jews at that time.

Furthermore, why on earth would Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, who was responsible for delivering Jesus to Pilate to be executed **prophecy** that he would die for the nations? The whole statement is nonsense.

[1504] This verse speaks of the involvement of the Gentiles into the Church. As noted in [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book, the author of this gospel was a Pauline Christian, in that he belonged to one of Paul's Churches which predominantly consisted of Gentiles, and as such the author speaks of the involvement of the Gentiles above. It should be noted that the above statement is the view of the author and is not sourced to Jesus or anyone else for that matter, and as such it can easily be dismissed.

[1505] The news of the plotting of the Jewish council reaches Jesus, either through divine revelation or from either of his two secret disciples: Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus. As a result, he is more careful and no longer walks and preaches in the open. He goes to a town called Ephraim and stays there with his disciples. This is the first and only time the town is referred to in the gospels, which has led many scholars to doubt whether the above is historically correct.

[1506] Meanwhile many Jews go up to Jerusalem for the Passover, and Jesus seems to be the hot topic; many of the Jews wait in anticipation of whether he will come or not, whilst the chief priests wait for him to arrest Jesus.

[1507] Readers will notice that the above story is also recorded in the other gospels: [Mark 14:3-9](#); [Matthew 26:6-13](#) and [Luke 7:36-50](#). John's version is in the same place as that of Mark and Matthew, but in a different house; not that of Simon the Leper but rather the house of Mary and Martha.

[1508] John's account seems to have been a combination of Mark/Matthew and Luke's, in addition to his own sources. In fact, we now have a complete mess of the above

tradition; what really happened?

Where did the above event take place; in Simon the leper's house (Mark/Matthew); or the Pharisee's (Luke); or Mary and Martha's house (John)? Was it a random woman (Mark/Matthew) or was she a sinner (Luke) or Mary? (John). Did the woman come in and break the box anointing his head (Mark/Matthew); or weep, oiling his feet with the oil and her tears and drying them with her hair (Luke); or was she Jesus' host who simply came in and anointed his feet and dried them with her hair (John)? Do the disciples complain about her actions of wasting the ointment (Mark/Matthew); or do they remain silent and the host instead grumbles that Jesus permits a sinning woman to loosen her hair and wipe his feet dry (Luke); or was it only Judas who complained (John)? To whom and what does Jesus reply? Does he tell the disciples that she has done a wonderful deed (Mark/Matthew); or does he tell Simon the Pharisee a parable and that her sins are forgiven (Luke); or does he tell off Judas only (John)?

It would not be possible that the above occurred twice in Jesus' ministry, since the accounts, even with their differences, are too similar. It is likely that the above story came from oral traditions. Mark utilised one version of the story, while Matthew copied from Mark, and Luke seems to have drawn on a different strand of the account. John then comes later and mashes all the above accounts into his own version.

Scholars have often argued that Luke's version is older, since it omits all reference to Jesus' burial and the fact that the woman oils his feet rather than his head points to an earlier version, since the head of kings were often oiled before feasts or major festivals.

The comments about his intentions are no doubt the invention of the author, who only wished to portray Judas in a poor light; not only did he betray Jesus, but also stole from him! In fact, it is highly likely that the whole event was created by the early Church, or at least major chunks of it.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) disliked the above accounts and accused the writers of fabricating them all; he writes:

"... But you will never have heard that any prophet had ever set such an example of permissiveness that he should allow a wanton and lascivious woman, a noted sinner of the city, to touch his body with her hands, to let her rub oil—her sin's earnings—on his head and to stroke his feet with her hair; that he allowed all this to be done by an unchaste young woman, and didn't so much as tell her to stop it. One is saved from giving way to suspicion, which naturally arises on seeing such a spectacle, only by an implicit trust in the goodness of Jesus. Nevertheless, the example is hardly worthy of being followed. In short, these Gospels are full of material which shows that they have not preserved their original form, or that their writers were other than the disciples" (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, *Jesus in India*, 2016, p.53-54).

[1509] John now turns to the **chief priests**. The reader recalls that after **Lazarus** was raised from the dead, many of the Jews believed in Jesus, but others went to the Pharisees and the chief priests and informed them of the event (11:46). The chief priests in turn held a council and thought it best to have Jesus put to death for the greater good of the whole nation (11:50). Now the author of John wishes to indicate that the chief priests wish to go as far as having Lazarus, the man whom Jesus raised, put to death, for the sole reason that many people began to believe in Jesus because of him. Yet, what would be the purpose of putting him to death? Would it stop people believing in Jesus? Jesus' followers may have increased due to them witnessing this miracle according to John, but how would murdering Lazarus stop them believing in the miracle? Whether Lazarus lives or is murdered is irrelevant; people will still have to depend on the hearsay of eye-witnesses to believe in the miracle.

Thus, it is either that the above allegation is fabricated and is the invention of the author or one of his sources, or that Lazarus was an active preacher of Jesus, and the council may have wished to silence this preacher.

[1510] The entry into Jerusalem is mentioned in John's Gospel as well as the Synoptic gospels (Mark 11:1-11; Matthew 21:1-9; Luke 19:28-40). See notes under the Gospel of Mark for a proper explanation of the Entry. It is interesting to note that in the other gospels this is the first time Jesus enters Jerusalem, and as such it is referred to as the Triumphal Entry. Yet, in John this is not the case: Jesus has visited Jerusalem numerous times before and the reason for the triumphal entry is due to the miracle of Lazarus.

[1511] Whilst the first three gospels never directly spoke of Jesus being the **King** of Israel, John does, which immediately puts Jesus in far more danger than what the crowds cry out in the other gospels. However, as already pointed out in the notes on the Synoptic gospels (first three) above, the cries of the crowd would be historically very unlikely; thus making the above Johannine version even more unlikely.

[1512] As opposed to the lengthy discussions of how the ride of Jesus is found in the previous three gospels, John sees it as rather irrelevant and moves straight to the point; Jesus simply finds an ass to ride on.

[1513] Both Matthew and John cite Zechariah in their text, but John omits the reference to the humility of the king in the prophecy, which to the author was not important. John also adds a further point that the disciples failed to link this prophecy to Jesus, but only seeing the events above did they understand.

[1514] The crowd which witnesses the raising of Lazarus are brought back into this picture and seem to meet and merge with the crowd who greet Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. The miracle seems to be a major point for John, as he mentions it many times and uses it as a platform for many events. As usual, the Pharisees sneer at the success of Jesus and complain to each other.

[1515] Important Words

Ἕλληνες (*Ellaynes*) – Noun, nominative plural, masculine of Ἕλλην (*Ellayn*) meaning: *a Greek; Hellene; culturally a person of Greek language and civilisation. In a religious sense a Gentile; non-Jew; pagan* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). The word can be applied to both non-Jews and Jews from the Diaspora who spoke Greek, and since they came to the festival, it is likely they were Jews.

[1516] Matthew (10:37-39) has a similar account as the above.

[1517] Important Words

κύριε (*kurie*) – Noun, vocative singular, masculine of κύριος (*kurios*) meaning: *lord; master; head of a family; master of a house. Also, guardian of a woman; trustee. Madam; applied to women from 14 years upwards* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). For the sake of consistency and to show the readers that the title was not a divine title and not just given to Jesus, I have translated it as *lord* as opposed to *Sir* in the WEB which is also completely viable.

[1518] After Jesus enters Jerusalem for the Passover, some **Greeks** come to see him. These were likely to be Greek speaking Jews or perhaps certain Greeks who were fond of and very close to the Jewish community, but had not taken the full step of converting to Judaism. They were often referred to as *God-fearers*. They approached **Philip**, presumably one of the disciples who bore a Greek name, and asked him to see Jesus. It is uncertain why Philip would consult with Andrew, but they team up and go and inform Jesus. From this, Jesus then begins informing his listeners that his time is coming, i.e. his dying on the cross. The poor Greek people who wished to see him seem to fade away into the background and are not spoken of later in the text.

[1519] This parable is about death, Jesus' death; that in his death comes life for the people. As will be shown later in this commentary, Jesus never expected to die on the cross nor wished to even go on the cross, so the above must be the words of the author and not Jesus.

[1520] The message is about hating this world, this life; those who do so will gain eternal life in the next world. It may be noted that this view and belief of the world; that the world is an enemy and should be detested and hated is not shared in the Islamic traditions. In Islam, the world is created by God, and humans are given life and live in the world; as such it is seen as a good thing. Furthermore, the world is the means for humans to attain nearness to God, through living in the world, one is to live a life of devotion to God; the longer one is able to live, the more devotion and good deeds he is able to perform to gain God's love and to grow closer to Him. For once he passes away, and is no longer in the world, his chances to gain God's pleasure and love are temporarily halted until the Day of Judgement.

However, this does not mean that one should become attached to the world, for in Islam the world is seen as a **sport and a pastime** (Holy Quran 6:33) and as such, Muslims are to live in the world with no attachment to it. Their sole purpose of living in the world is to gain the pleasure and nearness of God. Thus while we are not to hate the world, we at the same time are not to love the world either, but to love only God, and to welcome death as a means of finally meeting Him. The only reason for fearing death would be to give us more time in our preparing to meet God, like a person would prepare to meet his or her lover.

[1521] This verse speaks of some of the crowd not comprehending the words of God and mistaking the voice as thunder, whilst others think that it is an angel speaking to Jesus. It is difficult to interpret, since the answer given by God was in reply to Jesus' question and confirmation of Jesus's will to Him, yet Jesus tells the crowd that the voice was **for them** and not him, even though they did not comprehend it.

[1522] According to John, once Jesus is crucified and dies for the sins of mankind, the judgement of the world will commence and the ruler (Satan) will be cast out. What does this mean? Does it imply the end of suffering, evil and deceit? Not at all, since all are still present in the world. Furthermore, even those who do believe in Jesus are still under the control of Satan and have not completely freed themselves from him.

[1523] Verse 33 is only to confirm that Jesus meant crucifixion when he spoke about being elevated. The crowd curiously understand this to be a Messianic claim and argue that according to the Old Testament the Messiah was to live forever. However, no such prophecy exists in the Old Testament, but does so in other later Jewish works; see under [Mark 1:1](#) for further details of the Messiah and descriptions of him. For the crowd, since no prophecy existed about a dying Messiah, they question Jesus' saying about him dying.

The above is clearly the wording of the author himself and reflects the concerns of the later Church during the time the gospel was being composed. It was rather difficult for them to justify a dying Messiah; as such the above discussion was formulated to address the issue. But Jesus' answer in verse 35 does not address the issue at all. Instead, he speaks of himself (the light) and him being with them for only a short time and that they should believe in him.

[1524] John's Gospel has a variant account of the reason why Jesus spoke in parables. The reasons are the same as the other gospels, as is the quotation from Isaiah. Mark's version in [4:10-12](#) though is in a completely different context, being much earlier in Jesus' ministry compared to John.

[1525] This is a quote from Isaiah 53:1.

[1526] **Important Words**

Ἀποσυνάγωγοι (*aposunagowgoi*) – Adjective, nominative plural, masculine of Ἀποσυνάγωγος (*aposunagowgos*) meaning: *expelled from the Synagogue; ex-communicated; cut off from rights and privileges of a Jew; put under the ban or curse* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

[1527] Even though Jesus had performed many miracles, the people still disbelieved, the arm or power of God still made no impact on them. It would have been for this reason that God blinded the people and hardened their hearts. The above quotation is from Isaiah 6:9-10 much like in the Gospel of Mark. See under [Mark 4:10-12](#) for further details.

A similar verse is recorded in the Holy Quran:

“Those towns whose story We relate unto you, and verily their Messengers came to them with clear proofs but they did not believe in what they denied from before, thus Allah seals up the hearts of the disbelievers” (7:102).

Prophet Isaiah is supposed to have spoken the above because he saw his (Jesus') glory and spoke of him and not himself; however, this is simply the interpretation of the author of the gospel. Verse 42 appears to offer some sort of consolation; that some of the leaders of the Jews did in fact believe in Jesus; however, because they feared the Pharisees, they did not openly confess their faith. By stating that such leaders loved the **praise by men** more than **God's praise**, in fact condemns those leaders of the Jews who did believe in Jesus; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. However, these two figures are crucial in John's crucifixion account. Thus it is likely that the above are only the opinions of the author himself, since they make little sense.

[1528] The context of the above passage is uncertain and to whom Jesus is crying out is also uncertain, since a few verses earlier in 12:36 Jesus goes into hiding and is completely alone, so the above proclamation of Jesus is without any audience. This is unless Jesus is saying it to his disciples, which doesn't make much sense either. It looks as though the author has simply placed the entire episode in his gospel without thinking and has thus made it nonsensical.

[1529] This verse has often been argued and utilised by some Christians to argue that Jesus is claiming god-head for himself: That if anyone wishes to see God, they should look at Jesus, thus equating himself with God, or making himself God. Yet within the context of the passage, this is clearly not the case, since in the previous verse, Jesus states that anyone believing in him does not believe in him but in God. In like manner anyone wishing to see God, can come to Jesus who in turn will show him God.

If the current verse is to be interpreted literally, as some Christians wish and thus believe, that Jesus is God, then verse 44 should also be interpreted literally. This would imply that no one should believe in Jesus, but rather believe in God; the two being distinct and completely separate entities.

[1530] The mission of Jesus, like all prophets is not to come to the world and judge them, nor condemn people, but to save them. Through his teachings, he will save those who are spiritually dead, bring them back to life and guide them to God. Says the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe! Respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you that he may give you life... (8:25).

“The words *that he may give you life*, embody a great truth. The calling of the Messenger is always for the purpose of giving life to those who believe. It must, however, be remembered that when the quickening of, or the giving of life too, the dead is ascribed to a prophet of God, the words should be taken not in their physical but in their spiritual sense.” (Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, *The Holy Quran With English Translation and Commentary*, Vol 2, p.880)

[1531] Jesus above seems to be denying his role as **judge** in the hereafter, but rather states that his word or his teachings will judge the person. This implies that people will face the Judge, i.e. God, who will enquire whether they heard the teachings of Jesus and why they failed to follow them; the teachings of Jesus, or their lack of interest in his teachings being their downfall and the cause of their punishment in the hereafter:

“And those who disbelieve in their Lord, is the punishment of Hell, and indeed that is the worst destination. When they are cast therein, they will hear its *breath* as it blazes forth. It would almost burst with fury, every time a group is cast therein, its keepers will ask; ‘Did no warner come to you?’ They will say; ‘Yes, indeed a warner did come to us, but we denied and we said; ‘Allah did not send anything, and you are only in great error’” (Holy Quran 67:7-10).

[1532] The speech of Jesus ends with complete humility and subservience of Jesus under God. He does nothing of himself; his actions are dictated by God and God acts as it were through Jesus.

[1533] Unlike the Synoptics (first three gospels), Jesus does not actually partake in the **Passover festival**, nor does he eat the Passover sacrifice in John. All that the readers are told is that the Passover was at hand and that Jesus knew that he was to die very soon. In all the trips to Jerusalem in John’s Gospel, Jesus never does partake in any of the Jewish festivals; his visits to Jerusalem are only meant for preaching.

The timing is also off compared to the other gospels; according to all three of the other gospels, Jesus eats the Passover meal and is then arrested on the same night and tried the next morning. Yet, in John’s Gospel he eats no meal, but seems to get arrested before the Passover meal was eaten by the Jews (18:28 and 19:14). Thus in John’s Gospel Jesus is arrested and placed on the cross *on the day of preparation*, the day where the lambs were sacrificed, whilst in the other gospels Jesus is arrested and placed on the cross the *day after*, after he eats the Passover meal. This is another discrepancy which is difficult or impossible to reconcile and is due to the fourth gospel’s attempts to prove that Jesus was the Passover lamb, since he ‘dies’ on the same day as the Passover meal was to be sacrificed and eaten.

[1534]

The betrayal by Judas is spoken about by the other gospels as well (Mark 14:10-11; Matthew 26:14-16; and Luke 22:3-6). John follows the Gospel of Luke in that the reason for the betrayal was due to Satanic influence and not greed as Matthew states.

[1535] As regards the act of **feet-washing**; since sandals were worn by men, and they would enter people’s homes after walking on dusty roads and pathways, hosts would often have provided guests with water to wash their feet. Often Jewish disciples would wash the feet of their masters or Rabbis as a sign of respect and humility. The purpose of the above account is to turn this custom over, that the master (Jesus in this case) lowers himself and washes the feet of his disciples.

However, the above is unlikely to have happened in my view. The historical possibility of washing twenty-four feet with one basin of water and drying them with one towel is unlikely or plain unhygienic. Furthermore, the act of feet-washing was done before eating commenced, at the point when guests would enter into a house, not during or after a meal. It may simply have been a pleasant story concocted by the author of the gospel or by one of his sources.

[1536] After washing a number of his disciples’ feet, he comes to Peter who naturally tries to object. Jesus tells him that he does not understand now, but will later understand, perhaps after Jesus himself explains his actions in verse 12.

[1537] Ignoring Jesus’ response completely in verse 7, Peter repeats his objection in a stronger form in verse 8, which in turn results in Jesus rebuking him in a stronger form;

that if he does not permit Jesus to wash his feet, he will have nothing to do with him. This in turn results in Peter bursting out that Jesus not only wash his feet, but his **hands and head!**

[1538] This verse is difficult to interpret; those who have bathed do not need their hands and their heads to be washed again, but only their feet, since the feet would have gathered dust whilst walking outside. Therefore, Jesus does not need to wash Peter's hands and head, since he has bathed and is made completely clean. Yet the latter part **he is completely clean**, makes this awkward; if the person who bathes is completely clean, why have his feet washed? Furthermore, it seems that not all the disciples are clean; Jesus may now be referring to Judas (see the next verse), which points to the cleansing implying spiritual cleansing and not physical, which in turn makes the washing of the disciples' feet rather pointless, and thus, this supports the theory that Jesus never did actually wash their feet, but may have spoken of washing or cleansing.

[1539] The other reason for the washing of feet is now given by Jesus; that of humility, and that the disciples are to do this afterwards to each other. Yet, there is no example of feet-washing by the disciples after Jesus departs, which in turn leads to stronger support that the actual act was not performed by Jesus, but perhaps a simple lesson of humility was meant and spoken of.

[1540] Verses 16-20 seem to be separate traditions which were attached to the above story; they are completely unrelated to the washing of the feet of the disciples. Verses 16 and 17 simply speak of humility in general. Verse 18 is there to convince the reader that the betrayal of Judas was prophesied in the Old Testament; the quotation is from Psalms 41:9: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me." However, the verse has been plucked out of context by the author; it is a lament of prophet David about all those around him being against him, wishing for his death but God saving him. The author John read *betrayal* in the verse and *bread* and thus likens it to Judas's betrayal and the eating of bread.

[1541]

Important Words

ἐγὼ εἶμι (*ego aimee*) – Literally *I am*. But in the context, it is better to translate it as above. See [John 8:58](#) for details of the phrase.

[1542] Finally, the last two verses again seem to be another tradition appended to the back of the above story. They are in fact very similar to what Jesus has already spoken (see [Matthew 10:40-42](#): Rewards of Discipleship).

[1543] The above account is recorded in all four gospels; in [Mark 14:18-21](#); [Matthew 26:21-25](#) and [Luke 22:21-23](#). John is the only gospel to record the fact that Jesus was **troubled**, and it is unclear why he was if the traditional Christian interpretation of him willingly coming to the world to die for the sins of mankind is to be believed, since the coming of his death should have been good news for Jesus. The only possible explanation of why Jesus was troubled is that he was not expecting such betrayal by any of his disciples and when informed, most likely by a messenger of Nicodemus, he was greatly troubled and could not help but to blurt out his surprise and astonishment.

[1544] This is the first time the Gospel of John speaks of the **beloved disciple**, who is unknown and not spoken of in the other gospels. The identity of this disciple is often associated with John, the son of Zebedee, who is said to be the author of the gospel. Yet there should be no reason why the author would depict himself in the third person and in such a manner. Furthermore, in [John 21:24](#) it is rather clear that the author is referring to the disciple as someone distinct from himself.

The status and rank of this disciple is obviously very high, even higher than Peter, since he leans on Jesus' chest and is shown to be incredibly close to Jesus, far closer than Peter. The vast majority of Christians have argued that it was John the author of the gospel, referring to 21:24 to support their view. Yet the verse simply refers to *the disciple*

and not the **disciple whom Jesus loved** which is used throughout the gospel to refer to this one particular individual. Besides that, there is no evidence that John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, nor is John ever referred to as an apostle of higher rank than Peter. He is mentioned as a pillar of the Christian Church, although he is mentioned *after* Peter, thus showing his inferiority (Galatians 2:9).

Some scholars have argued that it was Lazarus, based on [John 11:3](#) where Jesus is said to have loved him. Yet all the references to this disciple whom Jesus 'was loving' make little sense if it were Lazarus. Why did the author not simply state that it was Lazarus? There seems no reason for him to hide his identity; and furthermore, Lazarus is not classed as one of the apostles of Jesus, nor does he play a major role in the Gospel of John, except when he is raised by Jesus. There is no further mention of Lazarus in the remainder of the New Testament and the Lazarus whom Jesus raised is not mentioned at all in the Synoptics (first three gospels).

Finally, the last option is that the disciple was Jesus' brother; James the Righteous (see under [Mark 6:3](#) for further details on James). The author most likely knew who the disciple was but chose not to mention his name, instead replacing it with the anonymous title/description. James fits the picture, and it is understandable why the author John would want to suppress his name; as mentioned in [Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels](#) in the beginning of this book, each of the gospel writers had an affiliation with one of the two Churches. The author of this gospel (John) was a devoted follower of Paul, who was opposed to the Petrites, of whom the head missionary was Peter and the leader was James. Thus it would make sense that the author of the gospel would suppress the activity and role of the head of the Church that was in opposition to that which he himself belonged.

[1545] After Peter beckons James to ask Jesus for more specifics, Jesus replies that the betrayer is the one whom he will give bread to next; in turn he then gives it to Judas. At this point, one would expect the disciples (particularly James and Peter) to jump up and seize Judas and maybe tie him up, perhaps beat him a little in the process of interrogation. But no, nothing of the sort happens. No further mention is made of Peter, and the disciples' dim-wittedness is displayed thinking that the giving of bread signalled the order to go buy some more. Judas, too, seems oblivious; accepting the bread immediately after Jesus says that he is going to give it to the betrayer.

[1546] As can be seen, the above narrative depicted by John is absurd and cannot be historically accurate. In all honesty, the other gospels' versions are no better. It is likely that Jesus was told about Judas betraying him, and after receiving such information, he may well have confronted Judas in private, but unable to convince him to depart from such plans, may have asked him to leave his company, trusting fully that God would not allow the plan to succeed. The disciples may have heard Jesus ordering Judas to go, and thus thought that it was to do a simple errand.

[1547] After Judas is identified as the betrayer and sent out Jesus then turns to the remaining disciples and addresses them. Much of the above are the words of the author and not of Jesus, since they speak of Jesus' glorification, which probably hints towards his dying on the cross and atonement for the sins of mankind, which was an idea most likely created by Paul as opposed to Jesus himself. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

[1548] The fact that all four gospels ([Mark 14:26-31](#); [Matthew 26:30-35](#); [Luke 22:31-34](#)) contain a bogus prophecy about Peter denying Jesus should not lead the reader to thinking that it is historically accurate. As is shown later in the narrative ([Mark 14:58-72](#)), Peter's actions were completely justified and he was no coward fearing for his own life; in fact he was prepared to lay down his life for Jesus during the arrest.

The other problem is, that our author John has just introduced another version of Peter's denial! Thus the reader is left with three different versions where; Mark/Matthew, Luke and John all discuss the same supposed episode but report it differently. In Mark and Matthew's Gospels, Jesus and his disciples are on the Mount of Olives when Jesus quotes the Old Testament about striking the shepherd and the sheep scattering. In response, Peter says he would never leave Jesus. Jesus then prophesies Peter's denial. In

Luke Jesus talks about Satan asking for them all, to which Jesus says he would die for Jesus. Jesus then prophesies Peter's denial, and finally, we have John's version above.

It is impossible to know which is correct, and most likely as already argued all three authors had probably heard, perhaps through oral traditions that Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him three times before the cock crows and therefore invented their own context and settings for this prophecy.

[1549] In order to reassure the disciples, Jesus reminds them of the hereafter. Jesus may well have considered death to be a possibility, and thus went about reassuring the disciples that death is not the end, and that the hereafter is the main focus of life. He gives them the glad tidings that in heaven there are many rooms or mansions, which will be prepared for his disciples. Verse 3 indicates Jesus' second coming, in that Jesus himself would return and take his disciples to himself. This part seems to be Johannine, in that the author seems to add the words of Jesus' return to collect them; as already explained earlier ([Mark 13:24-27](#): The Coming of the Son of Man) Jesus did not believe his second return or manifestation would happen within the lifetimes of his disciples. The belief of the early Church that he would do this, may have come from his predictions of returning from his preaching to the Diaspora Jews, particularly those in the east of Judea.

The other possible interpretation of the above could be that it speaks of the deaths of the disciples. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said that those who die will be raised among those whom they love (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 57, Number 37). Since Jesus has given the disciples the commandment to love one another (John 13:34), he, too, may have had a similar thought.

[1550] The author John most likely had multiple sources in the above narrative, which he seems to have merged into one. In the above two verses, Jesus was probably speaking about his departure to the Diaspora Jews living outside Judea, and had most likely already informed many of the disciples that he was going there after the Passover, particularly after learning that the chief priests plotted to have him killed. He therefore tells his disciples that they know where he goes, so do not worry too much. However, Thomas seems to have been kept out of the loop and complains that he does not know.

The statement of Jesus in verse 4 cannot imply death, since the disciples would not have known the way to death; such a statement is nonsensical, and would thus point to a physical location Jesus was speaking about. Furthermore, if Jesus was speaking of death and the way to God, then Thomas' question would no doubt have led to astonishment and possible anger on the part of Jesus: do the disciples still not know the way to God? They have been with Jesus for years and failed to understand some of his most fundamental teachings. The disciples are to be given a lot more credit and thus the above two verses must be referring to the travel plans of Jesus after the Passover.

[1551] This seems to point to a new saying, unrelated to the previous discussions, as the reply of Jesus does not answer Thomas' question. The answer of Jesus points to the method of attaining salvation, the way leading to God, which Jesus' closest companions would have known by now. The statement about Jesus being the way and none able to get to God without him has often resulted in many Christians arguing that Jesus is the *only* way to God, and that *all* other passages, past and future are closed. Some Christians have even gone so far as to state that those who have never heard of Jesus will still be damned to hell for eternity.

This obviously is not the case. If this interpretation is to be followed, then it would imply that all those who were born before Jesus are also damned. However, some Christians argue that if anyone were to believe in the prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament, they would be saved from damnation. There are numerous problems with this interpretation as well. Firstly, the vast majority of the non-Jewish world is now condemned, since they never had the opportunity to read these prophecies in the Old Testament. Not only that, but the vast majority of Jews are also condemned, since there is no mention of Jesus or any future saviour for that matter in the Torah, Deuteronomistic history, or Chronicles or any of the early books in the Old Testament. Thus, implying that all the Jews Moses saved were damned, along with numerous generations afterwards until hundreds of years later until the time of King David. See under [Mark 1:1](#) for the first time a Saviour is spoken of; it is shown that the concept of a Saviour King, or Messiah was

relatively recent in Jewish history (just a few hundred years prior to the coming of Jesus) and thus these people may have been saved if the interpretation of the Christians is to be followed. All in all, it is without doubt unjust and not befitting the All-Loving God believed by both Christians and Muslims.

The meaning of Jesus' statement is that Jesus is the way to God at that time, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Fourth Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association was asked this very same question:

"I have already answered this question in answer to the question raised here by our Hindu friend when he spoke of Krishna (as) having made the same claim, long before Jesus (as) mind you, I have read the fundamental books of all major religions and I find reference to exactly the same thing in so many statements of either the prophets or the divine scriptures. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) has made exactly the same claim. So, you must remember that it is a time related claim. It has to be made by every Prophet because if a Prophet says, 'I am not the way', then he is denying himself. He is rejecting the necessity of the people to find God through him. Hence, in Islamic terminology, in the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) is mentioned as Waseela, the 'doorway' to God. I have read that so many times. I love reading the Bible as well but because I have studied other religions (and read their books) I can immediately find similarities between the styles of expression. But this only means that in relation to God, a Prophet becomes himself an eternal truth because if he speaks the language of God and God alone then he also becomes eternal, not in person, not in relation to his human form, but in relation to his views and ideas and ideology. So, if a person belongs to an eternal God, he must have some features of that eternal God or aspects of his character transferred to himself, otherwise the claim of such a person that he is in communion with God, or that he belongs to him, would be falsified if he cannot show any signs. So these are the fundamental signs which are shown by all the major Prophets of the world that they have become identified with an eternal Super Being and in them you find the 'Alpha' and the 'Omega' and the 'door'. I hope this will be sufficient for you to understand our viewpoint on this issue." (*The Review of Religions*, October 1996)

[1552] This verse illustrates the unity of God and Jesus, in that the latter is such a perfect slave of God, that God Himself now works through him, and as such if any of the Jews of that time wished to meet/see God, they would have to come to Jesus who in turn would show them the way. He now leads people to God, for he is the way to God.

[1553] The absurd question is placed into one disciple's mouth by the author; throughout John's Gospel, Jesus has emphasised the close relationship between himself and God, so much so that often the Jews have attempted to kill him or accuse him of blasphemy (John 10:30 for example). Whilst Jesus speaks in the same tone above, it would be absurd to believe that one of the disciples again fails to understand and asks Jesus to see God Himself. In fact, being a Jew, Philip would never have thought to ask such a question, since the Old Testament is explicitly clear that none can see God (Exodus 33:20). Thus the question was put into the mouth of Philip by the author.

[1554] Rightly so, had Philip asked such a silly question, he would have been rebuked by Jesus.

[1555] These sayings are similar to many others which simply emphasise the close relationship between Jesus and God. This in no way supports the theory that Jesus is divine, sharing all attributes with God; as shown later, Jesus prays that the disciples, too, may be in him and God (see under [John 17:21](#)) stressing the importance and desire that all his disciples may share his way of life; that is to live for God.

[1556] This is a surprising verse; indicating that those who believe in Jesus will be able to perform all the miracles of Jesus, nay not just those, but even greater miracles. The saying possibly falls under the same category as those in [Mark 11:19-24](#): The Fig-Tree Is Withered. It should be noted that no Christian in this day and age is able to demonstrate any ability to carry out the miracles of Jesus, let alone greater ones!

[1557] The sayings end with the emphasis on prayer, that if they pray and ask God in Jesus' name, they will receive. The saying resembles the **Matthean version in 7:7**, with the exception that now Jesus' name is to be invoked, and finally in verse 14 above, Jesus himself seems to do it; i.e. answers the prayers of the disciples. The Matthean version is without doubt the more authentic, where Jesus instructs his disciples to pray to God and that He will answer their prayers, as opposed to Jesus himself above.

[1558] **Important Words**

Παρακλητον (*paraklayton*) – Noun, accusative singular, masculine of παρακλητος (*Parakletos*) meaning: *an advocate; defender; intercessor; as one who gives protection, help, and security; helper; comforter; counsellor* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000).

For the identity of the Comforter, see under **16:15** below.

[1559] Verses 18-25 seem to be another tradition, separate from the Paraclete one. From this verse begins the account of Jesus leaving the disciples, and his desire and wish to return to them later in his life.

[1560] Jesus will remain with them for a little while, until he departs to preach to the other Jewish tribes living outside of Judea. But he will remain with them, not in the literal sense but rather in the allegorical sense, since Jesus lives and they, too, live in the spiritual sense; whilst the remaining Jews in Judea are spiritually dead and cannot see Jesus for who he really is - the Messiah of God.

[1561] Returning to the status of Jesus; that he is the Messiah, his actions and goal of life being the same as God's, in such manner does he see himself to be in God, and after leaving his disciples, they also would carry on with his mission and thus live in him and God as well. Whilst other verses such as: "Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:38) are often utilised by many Christians to argue that Jesus is Divine, being the same as God Himself, the one above is often ignored, and it is obvious why. The verse begins with Jesus saying that he is in the Father, but then carries on to illustrate what this exactly means by saying the same regarding his disciples. It is impossible to interpret the verse literally like many Christians will do with verses like John 10:38 just quoted, but when it comes to this verse, they will switch to allegorical interpretations, exposing their own inconsistencies.

[1562] Jesus expresses his wish to manifest himself to these disciples sometime in the future again; he cannot do so openly, since he knows that any time soon he will be arrested and condemned by the chief priests and then it would no longer be safe for him to dwell with the Jews in Judea. However, he still desired to remain in contact with his true followers.

[1563] Not fully comprehending the gravity of what is to come, Judas (but not Iscariot) asks Jesus why he does not manifest himself to everyone as well.

[1564] Like many instances in this gospel, Jesus does not answer the question, but rather explains and advises his disciples to truly believe in him and God.

[1565] John now returns to the Paraclete account; see under **16:15** for a detailed interpretation and identity of this figure. It's worth mentioning that the identification of the Comforter in the above verse being the **Holy Spirit** must be the words and interpretation of the author John. As will be shown later in 16:15, the other characteristics of this figure going against it being the holy spirit.

Christians and Muslims for that matter, need to realise that prophecies of future figures are never explicitly mentioned by name. Take all the prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah, none of them mention Jesus by name. They are descriptions of what the Messiah would do and how people would recognise him. The case is true of the prophecies of the holy Prophet of Islam in the Bible. Therefore, having an explicit statement, identifying the Comforter as the holy spirit can only be the words of the author. If the Comforter was the holy spirit, why didn't Jesus simply talk about the holy spirit? Why go into detail about a Paraclete/Comforter? Again, see notes under [16:15](#) for a complete analysis.

[1566] Jesus will leave them with peace; his teachings which if followed will bring them complete peace. Verse 28 is a strong refutation of the divinity of Jesus, for many Christians argue that Jesus and Yahweh (God) are the same and equal, but as stated by Jesus himself above, this is clearly not the case. If Jesus is divine in any form, then the only conclusion is that God is divided, some of His parts or manifestations being inferior to other parts, which in turn is nonsensical. It is clear that Jesus was very much a man and a prophet of God as Islam teaches.

[1567]

The **prince of the world** is Death or Satan. This is supported by [John 12:31](#) where the *ruler of the world* will be cast out at judgement day. Likewise in 16:11, the ruler is judged, which will not point to any righteous figure, but rather its opposite. Jesus predicts the coming or the growing power of Satanic forces when he departs and wishes nothing to do with it. He may in fact have been divinely inspired that his community would become split and his own teachings be cast out by others who would enter and take over the Church. This most likely refers to the growth of the Gentile Church, who left the true teachings of Jesus following Paul instead.

[1568] After now delivering his speech which lasts the entire chapter, Jesus then tells his disciples to **arise and go from here**. One would expect Jesus to get up and start going somewhere, but he doesn't, instead he goes into another discourse spanning another three chapters, ending in Chapter 18! Again, this shows the author John sifting through traditions and stories and not presenting a narrative in sequence.

[1569] After Jesus introduces the Paraclete (Comforter), he then moves to another discourse about the **True Vine**. It is unlikely that he suddenly bursts out that he is the true vine directly after instructing his disciples to get up and go at the end of Chapter 14. The context does not fit very well, which must be due to the author John simply attaching separate discourses one after the other in his gospel. The above must be from different sources or at least they may be sayings of Jesus without any contexts, which John simply put together.

In the above, Jesus claims to be the **true vine**; in the Old Testament Israel is often likened to a vine or vineyard (Psalms 80:8) and the same seems to be in many of the parables of Jesus (see [Luke 13:6-9](#) and [Mark 12:1-12](#): The Parable of the Wicked Tenants). Whilst Israel is the vine or vineyard, according to John, it seems the true one is Jesus, and God Himself is the farmer who looks after the vine/vineyard.

[1570]

The **branches** would be followers of Jesus, yet at the same time, those who follow him but do not obey his commandments and do not live by his teachings, these will not bear fruit; meaning they will not have the Divine spark, and as such they will be cut off and taken away. However, those who do bear fruit, they will be cleansed further by God and will attain even higher spiritual ranks. The disciples are the first to be made clean, since they are the closest to Jesus.

[1571] Yet the disciples are not safe, and they should not be complacent, for it is through Jesus that they are made clean and will be kept clean. They must abide in Jesus, meaning that they must live by his teachings and standards, and doing so will enable them to bear fruit and live. For the fruit of a vine gets its nutrition and source from the vine, and in the same manner are the disciples of Jesus to gain their strength and source from Jesus. The latter verses explain the opposite; those not believing in Jesus, they will be cut off, gathered and burned. The passage resembles [Matthew 13:24-30](#): The Parable of the Tares.

[1572] From the discourse of the true vine, Jesus then moves onto the discourse of **love**. Again, like the previous sayings, this was most likely a separate saying which was simply placed in the above context by the author John.

[1573] The verses are about love and obeying the commandments of Jesus. If obeyed they will lead the disciples to love one another and will enable them to abide in Jesus' and God's love.

[1574] Even though the statement is true, yet it is unlikely that it came from Jesus, for it betrays a strong Johannine theology of the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus. The verse does not fit well with the passage, which speaks of love and following Jesus and nothing about sacrifice and atonement. For more details on the concept of atonement, see comments under [John 1:29](#).

[1575]

The disciples of Jesus have now been elevated to friends as opposed to servants: the latter simply obey the commandments of their masters without understanding or appreciating his commands; they also do so because they must and not because they wish to do so. Friends on the other hand do not; they obey their friend's instructions or wishes out of love.

[1576] Just like the world will **hate** Jesus, in turn it will hate his disciples as well. This is because the world only accepts its own, and since Jesus and his disciples for that matter are not of the world, i.e. they do not conform to the norms of the world and have in fact risen above it, and may be referred to as heavenly; the world will not recognise them and will reject them, and hate them.

[1577] The two verses (20 and 21) warn the disciples of persecution coming their way. Since Jesus is and will be further persecuted they, too, will have to go through similar ordeals. They will suffer persecution because of Jesus, because of his name and because they believe in him.

[1578] This verse is difficult to interpret: to state that the opponents of Jesus would have been innocent and without any guilt had he not come cannot be acceptable, for they had the Torah and knew full well the commandments of God. It is correct to say that they needed Jesus, but this was not because they needed someone to tell them right from wrong, but it was due to their going so far down the wrong path that they strayed so far from the true teachings of the Torah. It was when they had fallen to the depths of sin and loss that God sent them Jesus the Messiah to guide them back to the true teachings of the Torah. They were far from innocent, for God does not send prophets and teachers to innocent people (Luke 5:32).

Interestingly, if interpreted literally, the verse seems to argue against the common Christian concept of original sin: Jesus is stating that since he came to the Jews, they have no excuse now before God, but had he not come to them, they would not have any sin. Had Jesus been aware of the concept of original sin, he would have known that the Jews were never without sin, none for that matter are without sin. But in the above, he seems completely unaware.

It is likely that the author recorded the above tradition without realising its opposition to original sin. He may well have believed the concept of original sin, for the view is expressly stated by Paul in his letter to the Romans: "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). But the above tradition seems to originate from outside Pauline churches.

[1579] Those hating Jesus in turn hate God, since the God sent Jesus to them. To explain such hatred, the author resorts to scripture to prophesy it; the quotation is from Psalms:

“Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause”(35:19).

And/or

“More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore?” (69:4).

The author’s quotation of scripture is without its context; he seems to have simply plucked out the five words from the verses in the Psalms and wished to turn them into a prophecy in the times of Jesus, but as can be seen above, the verses have nothing to do with the Messiah, nor are they prophecies for that matter.

[1580] The previous verses speak of the world hating Jesus and condemning him. Thus one of the roles of the Comforter is to clear Jesus of such charges and bear witness for him. For full details over who the Comforter is, see under 16:15 below.

[1581] Members of Jesus’ community will be **put out of** the Synagogues, i.e. they will not be permitted to worship in them. Not only that, but people, (presumably Jews) will persecute his community to such an extent that they will murder them. Those committing the murders will think that they are doing a service to God. Such will be the state of some of the Jewish members after Jesus; something which sadly occurs in history many times, where prophets of God come, and they and their followers are often persecuted and murdered by the very people they have come to guide.

The same is being practised even today, by numerous Muslim groups around the world, where persecution and murders are being carried out very frequently. This is particularly the case with the persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, in countries like Pakistan and Indonesia. Those committing these acts all claim they are doing so for the sake of God. History repeats itself.

[1582] This is odd, the long discourse Jesus is going through is known as the farewell discourse in John’s Gospel; it spans through from Chapter 13 to 17 in his gospel and is spoken by Jesus in one sitting. In 13:36 Peter asks Jesus where he intends to go, but Jesus does not fully answer the question. Earlier in 14:5 Thomas complains that he does not know where Jesus is going and asks Jesus the way; again Jesus does not provide a complete answer. But in the above, Jesus turns to his disciples and rebukes them for not asking where he is going! Either Jesus had a very short attention span, or more likely the author of the gospel is combining numerous traditions into one long narrative and thus is creating inconsistencies like the above.

[1583] When Jesus does go, and only when he goes will the Comforter/Paraclete come. The statement that Jesus himself will send the Comforter cannot be taken literally, but rather implies that he will come from God with a similar but grander mission and role than Jesus. Jesus earlier states that he and the Father are one, and thus the Comforter will come not only for the sake of God but also for Jesus.

[1584] There has been intense debate over the identity of the Paraclete/Comforter; whilst the majority of Christians will argue that he is the Holy Spirit. The analysis below will show that the characteristics of the Holy Spirit do not match to that of the Comforter and that the latter is none other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). An examination of the role of Comforter will aid in understanding his identity:

1. He will dwell with the people and in the people forever (John 14:17).

2. Jesus must go away, for if he does not go away the Comforter will not come (John 16:7).
3. He will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness (John 16:8).
4. He will guide the people to all truth, truth which even Jesus was unable to preach to the people (John 16:13).
5. He will not speak on his own authority, but what he hears he will speak (John 16:13).
6. He will glorify Jesus (John 16:14).

Examining each point:

1. It is true that the Holy Spirit does abide with the people and in the people forever. Jesus speaks about his followers abiding in him and he abiding in them (John 15:4), this of course is not to be taken literally, but symbolically. A similar example is found in the Acts of Paul (an anonymously written text dating to around 160 CE) where the latter declares he will live forever; this again is uttered in symbolical language. Likewise, is it claimed by Muslims that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also lives with and in them, in that his legend lives on, and he is remembered by billions of people to this day, particularly in the five daily prayers where blessings are invoked upon him.

2. If the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, then this is difficult, since it means that it was not present whilst Jesus was present. A small analysis on the existence of the Holy Spirit shows how this is wholly incorrect: the Holy Spirit is mentioned before Jesus' birth; when his aunt Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41). Her husband, the prophet Zechariah is also filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:67). Thus the Holy Spirit existed before Jesus was born.

But the above text indicates that Jesus must go before the coming of the Comforter, implying that they cannot be present at the same time, yet the Holy Spirit did exist whilst Jesus was present: the man who lived in the Temple, his name being Simon had the Holy Spirit upon him (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit is said to have descended on Jesus in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22). Yet the above text in John states that the Comforter cannot come until Jesus departs, implying that the Holy Spirit had left Jesus earlier. Furthermore, Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit onto the disciples a little later (John 20:22). But this clearly contradicts the above statement that Jesus must go before the Comforter comes, since he appears to the same disciples who now have the spirit in the next chapter (John 21). The only way to resolve the many contradictions is to interpret the Comforter being distinct from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did arrive when Jesus was long gone.

Many Christians have raised issues with regards to the time frame; that the Paraclete was to come after Jesus, why did God wait for 600 years to send him? The answer lies in the baselessness of the question, for putting time frames on prophecies is impossible. The prophet like Moses was prophesied around 1400 BCE; the same question can be put to Christians that if this prophet was Jesus, why did God wait 1400 years for its fulfilment? Salvation according to many Christian interpreters can only come through Jesus, yet according to many Adam was created by God some 4000 years before Jesus; why did God wait 4000 years to reveal the only way to salvation? These are baseless questions. All that is indicated in the prophecy about the Comforter is that he will come after Jesus; when or how is not stated and thus is a pointless exercise. Another point worth mentioning could be that the people weren't ready for the newer and greater teachings of the Prophet, as Jesus himself indicates in verse 12.

3/4. Again, if the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and if it was to convince the world of sin and righteousness and to guide them to all truth, then naturally one would ask: 'What was Jesus doing?' Was he not explaining what sin and righteousness were? What was the purpose of his parables and sermons? Furthermore, if the role of the Holy Spirit was to do this: to teach the people *all* truth just a few days after Jesus' supposed death; to teach them things which Jesus was unable to teach; this in turn raises many more questions. What changed in the people that enabled them to learn more from the Holy Spirit than from Jesus? Why couldn't Jesus teach them? Is the Holy Spirit superior to Jesus since it teaches more and things he was unable to? And what exactly did the Holy Spirit teach that Jesus did not? Are there to be more revelations after Jesus, teaching all that he left out? Where are these revelations? For it has been 2000 years since the Holy Spirit would have been in action in the people.

Again, to resolve the above difficulties, the answer is that the Comforter is not the Holy Spirit but rather the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He did bring about a new revelation: he taught many things not covered by Jesus; he was able to teach things Jesus was not able to; since the mental state of mankind had evolved further to understand more complex ideas and concepts, which Jesus' disciples and followers were not likely to have understood. He was superior to Jesus and did teach mankind *all* that is required to become perfect with God.

5. The Comforter will not speak of his own authority, rather only what he hears. This implies that the Comforter is inferior to God, and is just a vessel for Him. Yet, this does not match the characteristics of the Holy Spirit, which is not inferior to God according to Christian interpreters, but rather is part of God. How is it that the Holy Spirit, which is another form or manifestation of God, only speaks what it hears? Thus it implies that God the Father reveals to the Holy Spirit which in turn reveals to mankind; making it a vessel and much like angels.

Again, the characteristic that the Comforter will not speak on his own authority but what he hears he will speak, matches the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) perfectly. Since the Holy Quran is believed to be words of God Himself, and His Prophet was a vessel, speaking only on the authority of God and only what he heard from God.

6. The Comforter will glorify Jesus; this could be a characteristic of the Holy Spirit, in that it revealed or encouraged followers of Jesus to glorify him. The same can be said regarding the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Quran clears Jesus of the many charges raised against him:

“And their (Jews) saying; ‘That we killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.’ But they did not kill him, nor did they kill him on the cross, but it was made to appear so to them, and verily those who differed in it are in doubt about it, and they have no knowledge about it...” (4:158).

And

“When the Angels said: ‘O Mary, verily Allah gives you good news by a Word from Him, his name is Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honoured in the world and the Hereafter, and from those who are near *God*’” (3:46).

Such are some of the characteristics and roles of the Comforter, which do not match that of the Holy Spirit, but rather the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In fact, when studying the characteristics of the Holy Spirit, i.e. what it does when it does descend on the disciples later in Acts (as opposed to its descent in John's Gospel (John 20:22), which results in absolutely nothing in the disciples), it seems very different from the actions of the Paraclete above. The second chapter of Acts describes what happens when the Holy Spirit descends onto the disciples, the main if not only ‘power’ given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit seems to be the power to speak in tongues or different languages. Yet, this is not described as a gift or purpose of the Paraclete above. Besides this, there is little other record of the actions of the Holy Spirit; none of which explicitly match the characteristics of the Paraclete.

Furthermore, Jesus states in 14:16 above that he will pray to God to give the people *another* Paraclete. This would imply that there are more than one, which again would not fit well with the Holy Spirit, implying that there are multiple Holy Spirits. A Comforter would thus mean a prophet; Jesus was talking about a prophet and that he will pray to God to give the people *another* prophet. This is further supported with the only other reference of Paraclete (Comforter) outside John's Gospel in the letter of 1 John 2:1: “we have a Paraclete (Comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Thus Jesus being a prophet of God is also called a Paraclete (Comforter).

Another important point worth analysing is the gender of the term. The noun Comforter is masculine; all pronouns for the term above are masculine, thus referring to a

masculine figure to come in the future. It is quite obvious that the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was also masculine, thus fitting this characteristic, but what of the Holy Spirit? What gender is it?

In Greek, the Holy Spirit is πνεῦμα το ἅγιον (Pneuma To agion). Pneuma being the *spirit* part. This in fact is not masculine but neuter. Thus if Jesus was speaking Greek (which is highly unlikely) and if he meant that the Paraclete was the Holy Spirit, then he would have described the Holy Spirit as *it* rather than *he*, for example Rom 8:16, 8:26.

However, the vast majority of scholars are in agreement that Jesus did not speak Greek but his mother tongue was Aramaic and he also spoke Hebrew. Thus the above prophecy was in either of those languages, leading to the next question. What is the Hebrew for Spirit? It is רוּחַ (ruwach) very similar to the Arabic for Spirit, being رُوح (Ru). Is this masculine or neuter? In fact the Hebrew for Spirit is feminine in gender (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*). Thus if Jesus was speaking in Hebrew or Aramaic and meant that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, instead of saying *he* Jesus should have said *she*.

Further evidence to show this can be seen in numerous early Christian texts discussing the Holy Spirit; in the Gospel of Philip, an early gospel found in the Nag Hammadi Library:

"Some said, "Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit." They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. *When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?* "

"Adam came into being from *two virgins, from the Spirit* and from the virgin earth. Christ therefore, was born from a virgin to rectify the Fall which occurred in the beginning. "

Even early Church fathers stressed the same point; St Jerome states in his commentary on Isaiah 11: "In the Gospel of the Hebrews that the Nazarenes read it says, 'Just now my mother, the Holy Spirit, took me.' Now no one should be offended by this, because *"spirit" in Hebrew is feminine*, whilst in our language (Latin) it is masculine and in Greek it is neuter. In divinity, however, there is no gender. Thus even early Christians understood the Holy Spirit as feminine in gender rather than masculine.

One final note which may be worth mentioning is that some Christians have theorised that the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had heard or someone had told him about the Paraclete, but instead of Paraclete, he misheard it or misunderstood it to be περικλυτος (Periclytos) meaning *Famous or Renowned* (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*), and so placed the Quranic verse regarding the advent of *Ahmad* as mentioned in Chapter 61 verse 7 in the Holy Quran. However, this is seen as absurd; the Arabic word for famous and renowned would be شهير (Shaheer). And so if the Prophet did misunderstand Paraclete for Periclytos, he would have at least used Shaheer instead of Ahmad, the latter having nothing at all to do with fame and popularity. They are two completely distinct words, and no Arab would ever translate Famous One as Ahmad. Furthermore, the fact that there are absolutely no gospel manuscripts in which the noun for the Comforter is Periclytos also proves that the above theory is absurd.

[1585] The concept of Jesus departing and returning is again emphasised. This concept is most likely to be his departure from Judea to the other Jewish tribes and his planned return.

[1586] The disciples are again portrayed to be incredibly dim-witted, and fail to understand the meaning of Jesus' words. The phrase **because I go to the Father** must be Johannine, the author placing them in Jesus' mouth, since that is what he must have understood Jesus to have meant, even though Jesus never did say it in verse 16.

[1587] Jesus then further explains; that his departure will bring joy to the world, since he does not belong there, and in their eyes they will have seen the departure of a trouble-maker. However, the departure of Jesus will be a sadness for the disciples, but in turn will become a joy once he returns.

[1588] It is uncertain at what hour or point in time Jesus means here, where he will speak to them plainly about God. Shortly in John's Gospel the arrest and trial and crucifixion of Jesus is to take place and he does not get a chance to teach his disciples again. It could not mean his second return, in the glorious fashion believed by most Christians, since Jesus would not speak or teach the disciples any longer, but judgement would occur.

The above therefore is another tradition the author John had access to and placed in his gospel without its original context. Jesus may well have spoken the above during his ministry and intended to explain further a few years later, or more likely intended to teach them more when he returned from preaching to the surrounding Jews after leaving Judea.

[1589] It is uncertain why the disciples suddenly understand everything; the words of Jesus earlier are pretty much a repetition of what he has spoken before, and he further states that he continues to speak in figures of speech (16:25) and will at a later date or hour speak to them plainly. But in the above, the disciples seem to understand Jesus and respond as if he stopped speaking in figures of speech and parables and is speaking to them plainly. From this, it is relatively clear that the author John is appending different traditions to his gospel, all of which are without their original contexts and as a result is creating a narrative with glaring gaps and holes in it.

[1590] Jesus then contradicts them by saying that they do not have complete faith, since very soon they will all forsake him. For further details, see under [Mark 14:26-31](#): Peter's Denial Predicted.

[1591] The switch from the third person in verses 1 to 3 (he) to the first person (I/me) in the remaining verses may actually indicate separate traditions/sayings of Jesus placed together as above. Verse 4 is interesting since Jesus states that he has completed the work God had sent him out for; he speaks in the past tense (aorist in the Greek), implying that already he has finished what God had commanded him to do. Yet, this is before he is arrested, tried and crucified. If Jesus' mission was to die for the sins of mankind as argued by many Christians, then the above saying is inaccurate. However, as argued throughout this work, Jesus' mission was to proclaim the message and guide the Jews back to the true interpretations of the Torah, and this he had done in Judea and thus the above statement makes perfect sense.

[1592] Reading this verse, the reader will recall [John 1: 1-18](#), where Jesus is stated to have existed before the world came into being (see the notes under those verses for their interpretation).

[1593] The reader may notice the numerous instances where Jesus states that he was sent by God: 11:42, 17:21, 17:25, 4:34, 12:44, 7:29, 5:30, 36, 37, 6:38. These are just a few of the many examples and I haven't even included this chapter! It is highly unlikely that they all originate from Jesus himself for the sheer number of repetitions border on obsession, and are not repeated in the Synoptic (first three) gospels.

[1594] This verse has caused much disturbance to many Christians, who find it difficult to reconcile with Jesus' love commands and the above, since in the above, Jesus has no concern for the world. He limits his prayer to his disciples and those believing in him and not the rest of humanity. In fact what this shows is the locality of Jesus' mission, that he was sent only to the Jews, to rejuvenate them and not the whole of humanity; for he only shows concern for the people he was sent to, i.e. the Jews.

[1595] The son of ruin or perdition is a term used to describe the Anti-Christ or Devil's advocate. Jesus may well be speaking about Judas who betrayed him, or any other enemy who wished to destroy Jesus.

[1596] See notes under [John 10:30](#).

[1597] The author, John, seems to have placed the above discourse in Jesus' mouth before his entering Gethsemane and getting arrested. It seems to be some sort of final farewell discourse, a conclusionary type of prayer, but as will be argued following on in this book, Jesus did not die on the cross, nor did he expect to do so.

[1598] John's Gospel omits all reference of Jesus' prayer in the garden (see [Mark 14:32-42](#)) most likely the author being uncomfortable or embarrassed by it. It actually contradicts Jesus' statement in 12:27: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? `Father, save me from this hour?' No, for this purpose I have come to this hour." However, as shown in the other gospels, Jesus does pray that God save him from the hour.

[1599] As will be shown, John's version of the arrest is remarkably different from that of the other gospels (see [Mark 14:43-52](#), [Matthew 26:47-56](#) and [Luke 22:47-53](#)), beginning with this verse, which also seems to involve Roman soldiers in the arrest. The band of soldiers, who are distinct from the soldiers of the chief priests and Pharisees are likely to be Romans. This in turn would mean that Caiaphas would have gained the permission for their use from Pilate, which may have been the case, since the former may simply have told Pilate that he required some soldiers to arrest a dangerous criminal who had a large following.

[1600] Jesus goes out to confront the crowd and ask **who they seek**. In turn they answer, and when he admits that he is the one they seek, they all **draw back and fall to the ground**. Why they fall is not explained, perhaps some sort of power of Jesus' reply... Or it is more likely that our author John got a little carried away and created a story bordering on stupidity. Even Jesus seems baffled a few verses later! The source is likely from some portions of the Psalms; in Chapter 27:2 it reads: "When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble *and fall*." It is likely that the author or his source was inspired by this verse and sought to portray Jesus as such a force that even his enemies, both Jews and Romans fell back from him; thus making the event entirely theological and of the imagination of the author.

[1601] Instead of portraying the disciples as fleeing, as Mark and Matthew do, in John, Jesus petitions to let his disciples go, and thus doing fulfils his prophecy in 17:12 where he states that he loses none of those given to him by God.

[1602] But alas, his words seem to have fallen on deaf ears, no sooner does he supposedly petition for the safety of his disciples, than Peter draws his sword and starts fighting the soldiers! Since all four gospels speak of scuffles, Jesus' saying in verse 9 above must be the words of the author, since they do not tally with what happens next.

Jesus orders Peter to sheathe his sword and asks rhetorically that should he not perform the task which he came to perform? This is not the reply given in Matthew, or in Luke; in fact there are now three different accounts of what Jesus supposedly says after ordering Peter to sheathe his sword. The above in John is obviously theological and not historical, as it lines up well with the gospel so far; since John omits all resistance of Jesus from not wishing to die, such as the prayer in Gethsemane and now Jesus supposedly does not resist the arrest in any way.

After reading all four accounts of the arrest of Jesus, the reader will see that there seem to be three distinct versions of what happened. Mark/Matthew, Luke and John's versions are very different. Reconciling all four accounts is impossible, which means that two are incorrect. This in turn is a severe blow to those who read the Bible as the inspired words of God, since the inconsistencies are clear and numerous. Mark/Matthew's account seems to be the least theological and perhaps closest to what happened historically, whilst John's is least likely to have happened.

[1603] John's version of the trial again is significantly different from the other gospels (Mark 14:53-72; Matthew 26:57-75; and Luke 22:54-71); there is no trial of the Sanhedrin, and Jesus is first taken to **Annas**, the father-in-law of Caiaphas for interrogation.

[1604] As already mentioned, under Mark 14:54, Peter brought with him another disciple who was known by the high priest, most likely Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. John does not mention who this person is; it is most likely to be either Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea as both were members of the Sanhedrin. It is strange why this disciple is not mentioned. It may be that the evangelist John was using another much older text which spoke of this event, and was written at a time when the secret disciple was still alive, and thus to expose him would put him in grave danger.

As was mentioned earlier, when Jesus was arrested, all the disciples fled, but it seems that Peter went to find Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus (the two secret disciples of Jesus who were also members of the Jewish council), who could gain access to the council sessions which would be held to condemn Jesus officially. Having found one of them, they both make their way to the High Priest's house where the preliminary hearing is to take place.

[1605] Important Words

The fact that the question begins with the Greek adverb *μή* (*may*) indicates that it is a slanted question, in which the questioner is expecting the answer to their question to be in the negative. Hence it has been translated as above.

[1606] After speaking to the slave-girl, Nicodemus or Joseph manages to get Peter to come into the courtyard and whilst walking past the slave-girl, she enquires whether he is a disciple of Jesus. As mentioned above in the Important Words, she expected the answer to be in the negative; Peter had no choice but to deny it, since it would have put Nicodemus or Joseph in danger and would have ruined the plans to save Jesus.

[1607] John again differs with the other gospels; there is no gathering of the elders and leaders of the Jews and no witnesses are brought forward to testify against Jesus; instead it seems that just a few people were present when Jesus is questioned in the house of Annas. The account summarises the questioning, but no specific question is mentioned; rather Annas seems to ask about his teachings and his disciples.

Unlike the gospel accounts, Jesus does not remain silent but answers Annas. Perhaps fed up with the bombardment of questions, Jesus tells Annas that he has not taught anything in private and that all those in the Temple have already heard him, including many of the Pharisees who were present. Annas should ask them instead of asking him. However, Jesus' statement about not teaching anything in private is not wholly accurate; numerous times in the gospels Jesus takes his disciples aside and teaches them privately: Luke 10:23; Mark 9:28; Matthew 24:3. Perhaps the author added the words for emphasis.

[1608] After replying to the high priest, one of the officers holding guard over Jesus feels offended by the reply and decides to take matters into his own hands by slapping Jesus across the face. Interestingly, after reading Matthew 5:42, where Jesus instructs his disciples to offer the other cheek when struck once, one would expect Jesus to do so himself, but instead he turns to the officer and demands an explanation. This shows that Jesus' teachings were not always applicable in all circumstances.

[1609] See Important Words under verse 17 above.

[1610] Important Words

This, too, is a slanted question but this question begins with οὐκ (*ouk*) implying the questioner is expecting *yes* as an answer.

[1611] Peter is waiting in the courtyard where the arresting party from the Garden of Gethsemane are relaxing; their duty done. Peter is recognised by one of them as having been in the garden with Jesus, but denies it. A second and then a third person accuse him of being a follower of Jesus which he again denies; after which the cock crows as foretold. The denial of Jesus in the gospels also contains discrepancies; according to Luke the cock crows once and Peter denies Jesus three times, and Jesus turns and looks at Peter. However, this is not the case in the above Johannine version, where Jesus is actually indoors in the house of Annas, and there is no mention of Jesus looking at Peter in the event of the third denial.

As already explained above, Peter had to deny knowing Jesus for the sake of the latter's life. The whole story of the cock crowing and Jesus looking at Peter when he denies him seems to be the invention of the early Church to explain Peter's denial (see Mark 14:53-72: Peter's Denial Predicted for more details).

[1612] The trial before Pilate is again different in John's gospel versus the other gospels (Mark 15:1-5; Matthew 27:11-14; and Luke 23:1-5). The jump to this section from the last is also odd, since the last mention of Jesus was that he was bound and Annas sent him to Caiaphas (18:24). The plural *they* must therefore refer to some of the chief priests, not the Sanhedrin or council, since John does not know of any council or trial of Jesus.

The Jews stood outside, in fear of becoming ritually **unclean**. Although a Gentile was not deemed automatically unclean by most Jews, often he (the Gentile) was made unclean by multiple factors. The first of these was to do with his wife, who was made unclean by her monthly menstruation and had not washed afterwards (Lev 15:19-24). Since she was made unclean and never washed, by touching her husband, she would have made him unclean as well. Some Jews, particularly those who were strict would consider Gentiles to be permanently unclean due to their building their homes over burial grounds, which would automatically make them unclean due to corpse defilement (Numbers 19:16). Touching an unclean Gentile would make the Jew unclean as well, who then had to wash and would be unable to eat at the Passover. Thus the Jews above are portrayed as being cautious not wishing to go anywhere near Pilate, whom they considered to be unclean.

The Jews did not want to be made unclean as they wished to eat the Passover meal; thus according to John the Passover meal had not yet been eaten by the people. Yet according to Mark, Jesus is arrested *after* eating the Passover meal (see under John 13:1 for more details).

[1613] The chief priests visit Pilate to hand Jesus over to them. Pilate steps outside to them and asks the most obvious question: **What is the allegation against him?** This is something which the other gospels seem to omit. In fact, as will be shown, it is the Gospel of John which actually presents the most complete and fullest account of the interrogation of Pilate.

There is however, a difficulty with the opening question of Pilate; it is recorded in the Gospel of John that Roman officers accompanied the Jewish soldiers in Jesus' arrest (John 18:3). The Roman soldiers would have only been used by the priests after the permission of Pilate was sought, but in the above Pilate seems completely unaware that they were bringing Jesus to him and for what reason.

[1614] When asked what charge they are raising against Jesus, the answer of the Jews is almost sarcastic and evasive, which probably leads Pilate to almost dismiss the entire charge telling them to judge Jesus according to their own Law. But they quickly give him the outcome of their findings; that Jesus is guilty of such a crime deserving death. But the right of condemning and executing a man under Roman law was only permitted by the Romans themselves and thus this was the reason why the Jews had to deliver Jesus over to Pilate.

[1615] This is not completely clear; the verse is referring back to 3:14 where Jesus supposedly speaks of himself being **lifted up**. As explained under the commentary of 3:14, the author seems to ruin the statement of Jesus, which referred to the sinning of the people and their being saved through believing in Jesus. But the author turns it into a prophecy of him being crucified, which somehow is fulfilled in that the Jews ask Pilate to have him put to death. It is very unlikely that Jesus did refer to himself as being *lifted up*, knowing that he would one day be crucified, since Jesus had no intention of dying on the cross; as the prayer in Gethsemane shows and his subsequent interrogation by Pilate, along with Jesus' own reaction on the cross.

[1616] Very much like the other gospels, Pilate questions Jesus about the only charge which actually grabs his attention: is Jesus claiming to be a new King? The King of the Jews? All other charges were theological and of no interest to Pilate.

[1617] Before Jesus explains the accusation, he wishes to know what Pilate thinks of the title and his claim. Why is Pilate asking him? Has he learnt that Jesus claims to be King of the Jews from his own sources or simply through what the chief priests have told him? If it is the latter, then Pilate is simply reiterating what the chief priests accuse him of, but if it is the former this is more serious, since it would mean that Jesus' preaching activities had caught the attention of the governor.

[1618]

Pilate responds that it is the latter; that the chief priests delivered Jesus up to him with the charge and he wishes to know what Jesus' reply is to the allegation. Pilate has no concern over theological accusations and thus makes the point that he is not a Jew, but he only wishes to interrogate Jesus and allow him to reply to his accusers.

[1619] This is the first time Jesus actually defends himself and answers the accusation raised against him. He does not deny being the King of the Jews, but explains to Pilate what kind of kingdom he is King of; it does not belong to this world but of a higher place. Jesus is not of this world (John 8:23), likewise, nor is his kingdom.

[1620] Pilate seems to understand and seems to relax slightly, sensing no danger in Jesus and enquires more about Jesus' claim and his kingship. While Jesus claims to be a spiritual king, he does at the same time challenge Pilate to see the truth. Pilate the sceptic replies and enquires about the truth. At this point the author stops the conversation. Perhaps his source did not contain any further details, or maybe Pilate took Jesus aside and had a more private discussion which then resulted in Pilate going out for the first time and defending Jesus, telling the Jews that Jesus is not guilty of any crime.

As can be seen, the trial is different to the other gospels, where the only thing Jesus says is *so you say* when asked if he claims to be King. The author Mark makes it very clear that Jesus *made no further answer* after that (15:5), so what really happened? Did Jesus and Pilate have a conversation as John indicates or was Jesus silent as Mark states?

[1621] In John's version of the release, the story is even more unbelievable. This time it is Pilate who instigates and reminds the Jews of the custom where he is to release to them a prisoner. Again, the crowd cry out that Barabbas should be released rather than Jesus. See notes under [Mark 15:6-14](#) for further details of how the whole event was most likely an invention of the Church.

[1622] After Pilate fails to release Jesus, he in the end decides to have Jesus flogged: in Latin *flagellum* meaning *several thongs or lashes attached to a single handle* was used to flog the victim. The victim was then tied to a lower pillar so as to allow them to bend over a high pillar so they could be stretched. The aim of the flogging was not to kill the victim but to punish them severely, but that did not stop many of its victims from dying due to a loss of blood.

[1623] After he is flogged, the Roman soldiers mock him by placing on his head a **crown of thorns**. They also dress him up in a **purple** garment, which they probably had taken

off Jesus initially when he was sent back from Herod, who had dressed Jesus in radiant clothing (Luke 23:11).

[1624] The reason for Jesus being flogged seems to differ in the gospel accounts: both Mark and Matthew speak of the flogging as an official part of the crucifixion (Mark 15:15-20 and Matthew 27:27-31: Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers), whereas Luke omits any reference to any flogging, but speaks of Jesus being disciplined (23: 22); whilst in John it seems that the flogging was part of the benevolent plan of Pilate to have Jesus released. His aim seems to have been to have Jesus flogged and returned to the Jews bloody and battered to convince them that he is harmless and too helpless to be a threat. The plan seems quite unbelievable, and raises doubts whether Pilate had such a plan, since the flogging is severe and if Pilate was convinced without a shadow of doubt that Jesus was innocent, why put him through such an ordeal? And Pilate would never have permitted his soldiers to mock Jesus, whom he had thought was an innocent man.

[1625] Alas, the plan seems not to work and the Jews still have no pity on Jesus, crying out for his crucifixion.

[1626] Pilate has just had Jesus punished and presented to the crowd, beaten and chastised perhaps in the hope that they may pity him and let him go. However, they persist and want Jesus condemned and crucified, but Pilate did not see Jesus as a political threat, or a revolutionary. Under his interrogation Jesus is harmless and innocent of the charges the Jews raise against him. The Jews then introduce a new charge, this time it is a doctrinal charge; that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy and according to their Law must be put to death. However, it should be noted that claiming to be the son of God was not blasphemy (see under [Mark 14:62](#) for more information on blasphemy).

[1627] Pilate is **fearful** for the first time. A possible reason could be that he feared for his job or even his life. It is recorded by Philo; the Jewish philosopher in the first century, that on another occasion Pilate was naturally inflexible and stubbornly refused what the Jews had claimed against him until they mentioned that the Emperor Tiberius would not approve of him violating their customs. It was this point which got to Pilate, for he feared that they would send an embassy to the emperor and also mention the many other violations he had committed (ad Gaium 38: 301-302). Pilate most likely feared the Jews in the above trial of Jesus for similar reasons.

[1628] After speaking to the Jews, Pilate goes inside to Jesus and asks him questions; the first question gets Pilate nowhere, very much like his first question to Jesus earlier. The question above shows Pilate's desperation; his impatience and frustration come out as he is now dealing with a theological crime which he knows nothing about, rather than a political one. He does not know where to begin and asks the rather pointless question of Jesus' origin, to which Jesus does not even bother replying.

[1629] Impatient with the lack of co-operation from the man he is trying to save, Pilate blurts out about the dangerous game he thinks Jesus is playing: does Jesus not know that Pilate has the authority to save him or condemn him?

[1630] This question forces Jesus to respond, but not as Pilate expected. Instead of acknowledging the fact and cooperating with Pilate, Jesus instead rebukes him. Pilate does not have the power to condemn him, but only has the power which has been granted to him from above, i.e. from God. Thus Jesus has complete faith in God and knows that he is in His hand and will only be condemned to crucifixion if God wills.

However, the real sin lies with those who have delivered Jesus to Pilate wanting to have him killed or executed. They are the ones who will have the greater burden of sin. Pilate, too, will share a bit of it for ultimately he gives in and has Jesus condemned to death.

The extreme faith of Jesus in God is typical of a prophet of God. A similar occurrence happened in the time of the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him):

“Narrated Jabir bin ‘Abdullah:

That he fought in a Ghazwa towards Najd along with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) returned, he too, returned along with him. The time of the afternoon nap overtook them when they were in a valley full of thorny trees. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) dismounted and the people dispersed amongst the thorny trees, seeking the shade of the trees. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took shelter under a Samura tree and hung his sword on it. We slept for a while when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) suddenly called us, and we went to him, to find a bedouin sitting with him. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "This (bedouin) took my sword out of its sheath while I was asleep. When I woke up, the naked sword was in his hand and he said to me, 'Who can save you from me?', I replied, 'Allah.' Now here he is sitting." Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not punish him (for that). (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Number 458, made available on www.sunnah.com).

[1631] It is not certain how the Jews find out about Pilate's intentions, since the latter does not say anything or try to defend Jesus again. In turn, they now play their trump card; if Pilate releases Jesus, it will make him an enemy of Caesar. Pilate is already nervous about the Jews complaining about his lack of concern over their customs, and now they threaten to question his loyalty to Caesar. This was a dangerous threat, for the emperor was harsh in dealing with governors or officers guilty of disloyalty.

Ironically, Pilate's boast to Jesus that he has the power to release him is shown to be completely false, since he now has no power to exercise his authority. A complaint to the emperor that Pilate had released a man claiming to be king would have led to a thorough investigation and would bring to light his previous violations as governor (see under [Luke 3:1](#) for details).

[1632] Pilate's final attempt to save Jesus by making the Jews realise what they are doing is by placing the beaten and chastised Jesus on the judgement seat in front of them. He then shows them their king, but even this has no effect on the Jews; they cry out again that they want him crucified. Sarcastically Pilate asks them if they wish him to crucify their king, to which they in turn cry out that they now have only one King, Caesar.

[1633] There seem to be three different versions of Jesus' journey to Golgotha. [Mark 15:21-27](#) and [Matthew 27:32-39](#) have him carry his cross with the aid of Simon of Cyrene. This is directly contradicted by John who states categorically that Jesus carried the cross *himself*. [Luke 23:33-34](#) agrees with Mark and Matthew, but has Jesus address and prophesy against the Jewish crowd who follow him, bewailing him.

It is rather difficult to reconcile all three versions. Why did Mark, Matthew and John omit the address of Jesus to the crowd which Luke records? It seems that Luke had been using the text of Mark, but had access to another tradition where Jesus addresses the crowds. There is no possible way to reconcile the fact that John contradicts all the other accounts by emphasising that Jesus carried the cross *himself*; this may be due to the author wanting to stress and depict Jesus bearing his own cross with no aid, since he *himself* was to bear the sins of mankind. Another possible reason could be that John was aware of some Gnostic beliefs, which stated that it was Simon of Cyrene who was actually crucified and not Jesus. To remove any such misconception, the author removed the reference of Simon completely. Finally, the other popular reason for the omission is that the author was in fact likening Jesus to the child Isaac when he was being taken by Prophet Abraham to be sacrificed. Abraham took the wood and gave it to Isaac to carry (Gen 22:6); there was no other party involved in the carrying of the wood.

[1634] Only in John's Gospel do the chief priests protest to what Pilate has inscribed; they prefer to have Jesus quoting the saying above rather than the statement. Pilate, most likely frustrated and irritated that he was forced to condemn an innocent man by the priests refuses to oblige and dismisses them.

[1635] The above is a quotation from Psalms 22:18 from the Septuagint: “they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.” The author John attempts to convince his readers that Jesus has fulfilled their prophecy (if it can be referred to as a prophecy). However, the stripping and taking of the possessions of the victims by the soldiers was a usual practice and would have happened to *all* victims sentenced to death.

[1636] As opposed to the women standing at a distance as the other three gospels state, John has them standing by the cross. **Mary**, the mother of Jesus and **Mary Magdalene** are there, Salome on the other hand is not in John’s scene, but seems to be replaced by another **Mary**, the sister of the mother of Jesus’ Mary! The author seems to have confused the many Marys in his sources, and has actually placed two sisters with the same name by the cross.

[1637] The Beloved disciple is also present (regarding his identity see under [John 13:23](#)), along with the women. It is not clear why Jesus would refer to his own mother as **woman**, yet to be fair the mother of Jesus is never actually named in the Gospel of John, nor is she really ever depicted in the most pleasant of ways: e.g. in the marriage of Cana she is again rebuked by Jesus (see [John 2](#): The Marriage at Cana). It is quite obvious that Jesus would not have referred to his mother in such derogatory terms, and the above are words of the author placed in Jesus’ mouth.

If Mary the mother of Jesus and James his brother were present, they may well have had some conversation and Jesus may have commanded James to hereafter look after his (both Jesus’ and James’ intended) mother.

[1638] John’s account differs from the other gospels in many ways. See especially [Mark 15:33-39](#) for the initial account. To begin with, Jesus makes no desperate cry, instead he supposedly fulfils some Old Testament scripture by saying **I am thirsty**. This has caused a serious problem for many Christians who have struggled to find it in any of the Psalms or any other book in the Old Testament. One scholar has pointed out that it may be referring to Psalm 69:21: “They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” Although the noun **thirst** does appear, it does not fit well with the Johannine context, along with the fact that Jesus speaks of **thirst** as a verb and not a noun. Therefore it is relatively safe to assume that the prophecy which Jesus supposedly fulfils is only in the imagination of the author or his source.

[1639] According to Mark and Matthew, Jesus receives a drink *after* crying out to God, but in John it is because he simply asked for a drink. Either way, he gets a drink and like the other gospels, John also indicates that after receiving the drink, he immediately passes out.

[1640] The above account is completely absent from the other gospels. It seems that our author John had access to some traditions which the others did not. It starts with the Jews not wishing the bodies to remain on the cross during the **Passover** and **Sabbath**, and thus asked Pilate to have the criminals’ legs broken.

[1641] The soldiers used what is called a *crurifragium*, a heavy wooden club which they would use to beat the unfortunate victim to death. However in this case, they chose to **break their legs**. Since the victims would rest their body weight on their legs, breaking the legs would cause the victims’ weight to be supported by the nails driven into their wrists. This would bring about excruciating pain, which would result in shock and kill the victims much quicker.

[1642] Important Words

ἐνυξεν (*enusen*) – Verb, aorist active indicative, 1st person singular of νύσσω (*nusso*) meaning: *to prick, stab or pierce* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). So as we can see, this is not a major stabbing of the spear, but just a prick. Most modern translations prefer the word *pierce* which is also correct, however, when analysing the word usage, it is obvious it was just a prick: the word has only been used in the New Testament once, and three times in the Greek Old Testament;

“But now, since it was nearly the middle of the tenth hour, the person who was in charge of the invitations, seeing that the guests were assembled, approached the king and **nudged** him” (3 Mac 5:14).

“When my soul departed from the Lord God of Israel-- Had not the Lord helped me with His everlasting mercy. He **pricked** me, as a horse is pricked, that I might serve Him, My saviour and helper at all times saved me.” (Pslams of Solomon 16:3-4)

“**Poke** someone in the eye and they will shed tears; but wound their heart and they will show deep pain” (Book of Sirach 22:19).

Its usage has always been to nudge, or poke or prick.

Commentary

Discovering that Jesus was already dead, the soldiers do not see the point of going through the effort of breaking his legs, so instead, they prick Jesus' **side**. This was most likely to test whether Jesus was really dead or simply faking death. If he was faking death, a prick to the side would have caused Jesus' body to flinch and move, thus giving away such pretence and would then have resulted in his legs being broken straight away.

It is often argued by some Christians that the soldier came and thrust his spear into Jesus' side in order to kill him. However, as explained under the Important Words above, the verb used implies a small prick. Furthermore, if the purpose of the spear thrust or prick was to kill Jesus, it would have made more sense for the soldier to thrust it into Jesus' front, straight through the heart, rather than the side which may not have caused death. Furthermore, if they wished to kill Jesus, they would have simply done to him what they did to the other criminals; broken his legs.

[1643] Immediately when pricked, Jesus' side begins to **bleed**, which in turn is a sure sign of Jesus being alive, since a dead body does not bleed when pricked. A person can only bleed as heavily as portrayed above if the heart is still pumping blood around the body.

Numerous Christians have provided all sorts of explanations for the bleeding, since they argue that Jesus died *before* the piercing. Theories about his heart being hit, that his blood congealed, separating the red blood cells from the fluid are among many. However, the simplest is most often the most accurate. The first point to mention is that it was dark (Mark 15:33). Thus, the likelihood of eyewitnesses being able to see **blood and water** *separately*, whilst standing a few metres away in the dark with just torch lights, is relatively slim.

The writer Holger Kersten explains that the author John was using an expression to explain the sheer volume of blood coming out of Jesus' side. He explains that nowadays, the expression *sweating blood* (its German equivalent being *blood and water*) is used to express intense anxiety; it does not imply that a person actually sweats blood. It is the same, he argues, when the expression is applied to the observance of wounds; it simply means that a lot of blood is visible. The eyewitness was very surprised to see so much blood pouring out of Jesus' side from a minor prick and thus added *water* to explain such an occurrence (Holger Kersten, *The Jesus Conspiracy: The Turin Shroud & The Truth About The Resurrection*, p.251).

Another possible explanation of the author adding *water* could be theological. The author has, throughout his gospel, linked Jesus' death to the Passover Lamb sacrifice (Jesus is referred to as the *lamb of God* in John 1:36. Jesus also does not eat the Passover meal in John's Gospel like he does in the other gospels but is actually crucified on the day the Passover Lamb was to be eaten, see under [John 13:1](#)). Thus it is likely that he wished to link Jesus' blood being spilt with the Passover Lamb sacrifices in the Temple. Instead of simply stating that blood flowed from Jesus' side, he may well have used the term which links to the Temple Sacrifices; Rabbis later argued whether it was permissible to be

touched by the *blood and water* of the sacrifices (the water being used to wash away the blood):

“He said to him, ‘If we were to do that, they would call us “the permitting Court”. As we have learnt: R. Jose b. Jo’ezer of Zeredah testified that the stag-locust is clean, that the flow *of blood and water* from the place of slaughter (in the Temple) is non-defiling, and that one who comes in contact with a corpse is defiled; and they called him “Joseph the permitter”’ (Babylonian Talmud: Tractate ‘Abodah Zarah, Folio 37a, made available in www.halakhah.com).

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah provides another possible interpretation, he writes:

“If he (Jesus) was dead and his heart has stopped beating, such active bleeding as would cause the blood to rush or gush out would be impossible. As most, coagulated blood and plasma could have passively seeped out. But that is not the picture which the New Testament presents, it says that blood and water rushed out. As far as the mention of water is concerned it should not be surprising for Jesus to have developed pleurisy during the extremely exacting and punishing hours of trial that he spent upon the cross. Also, the stress of the crucifixion could have resulted in exudates from the pleura to collect like bags of water, which is medically termed as wet pleurisy. This condition, which is otherwise dangerous and painful, seems to have turned into an advantage for Jesus because when his side was pierced the swollen pleura could easily have played the role of a cushion protecting the chest organs from being directly penetrated by the spear. Water mixed with blood rushed out because of an active heart.” (*Christianity, a Journey from Facts to Fiction*, p.72)

Either way, what is certain is that the blood came out of Jesus’ wound after he was pricked, and this was a sure indication that his heart was still pumping blood around his body and thus he was very much alive at this point.

[1644] All of a sudden, the author moves off from his narrative and attempts to persuade his audience that the above is true and was witnessed by a **truthful** man. This brings about an awkward break to the text which in fact may indicate some kind of tampering. The original text of John carries on explaining that the piercing of Jesus’ side is prophesied in the Old Testament. The above verse may well have been inserted into the text of John after the original had been written. What was the purpose of the above verse? Was it to prove that Jesus was dead? The reader already knows this from a few verses earlier in verse 30.

Jesus has to all intents and purposes stopped breathing and hangs there motionless. There was no medical examination as to whether he was still alive or not. It merely seemed as if he had collapsed on receiving the drink and as there was no sign of movement or subsequent recovery, it was assumed that he was in fact dead. Certainly Jesus thought he was dying as he slipped into unconsciousness, but the crowd did not know that he had been given a drug which brought about his sudden condition. They rejoiced because he was dead and he had been proved a false Messiah by his death on the cross. The world would never believe him now, neither did the disciples until much later, but the eyewitness draws our attention to something which contradicts that; something which shows they did not kill him so that we, too, may share his faith and belief. God had saved him from the accursed death and brought the evil plans of his enemies to nought.

It was the sign of the blood; as the soldier pierced his side Jesus immediately bled. To the eyewitnesses, being familiar with medicines and herbs, this was a sure sign of life, not death. If Jesus had in fact been dead, the heart and circulation would have ceased and there would have been no pressure to cause the blood to flow like it did. The immediate flow meant that the circulation of the blood was still occurring. It is possible that a later Christian scribe had access to a tradition which argued that Jesus was alive and to illustrate that he was, used the bleeding as a sign, and convinced with this argument the scribe may have inserted the above verse into the text of John.

[1645] According to the author, the reason why Jesus’ bones were not broken was due to the fulfilment of scripture: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Psalms 34:19-20). However, as shown, the author only quotes verse 20 of Psalms forgetting

There is another reason for some spices which actually were applied to the body, but these were for cleansing purposes, as mentioned in the Tamara and earlier Jewish traditions: Shab 23:5 indicates that the corpse was *anointed and washed*, i.e. it was first smeared with oil to remove the dirt and then washed to cleanse it of the oil. Jesus' body was anointed with the spices, but was not washed, so it cannot be for this reason. Furthermore, it would have been a complete waste of money and effort to wash a body with myrrh and aloe, both of which were incredibly expensive; more expensive than gold. Also, to use a hundred pounds worth would have been utterly pointless, when just a few grams mixed with water would have been enough.

Some Christians will insist that the spices were used in embalming the dead. Yet, this was not the custom of the Jews. It is briefly mentioned in the final words of Judah: "My children, observe the whole Law of the Lord; in it is hope for all that keep His ways. I die this day at the age of one hundred and nineteen years before your eyes. None shall bury me in a costly garment, nor shall ye cut my body to embalm it, but ye shall carry me to Hebron" (Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Volume 2, Judah Warns against Greed and Unchastity).

It is highly unlikely that the Jews would have cut a dead body; furthermore, Jesus is not reported to have been cut at all. Thus to conclude, there seems to be no other reason for the application of such a huge amount of spices (which have healing properties) being applied to Jesus, except that it was for healing his wounds and to stop the bleeding. It was a Jewish custom to use spices at burials, but never to apply them to the body directly. They were used for cleaning, whereby spices were applied and then washed off with water; or they were burnt to counter the decaying smell. The spices brought by Nicodemus were used to aid in Jesus' healing and recovery; there can be no other reason for them. It seems that some of the followers of Jesus (not all) were planning to save him, and thus far everything was going according to plan. Having got the body and having applied the herbs, they now had to take him out of sight so as to carry out further procedures to save him; stitching his side, hands and feet etc.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) has written extensively about the spices applied to Jesus' body; he refers to it as 'Marham-i-Isa' or the 'Ointment of Jesus' in which he lists a number of medical books which mention such an ointment. For a fuller account of the ointment, refer to chapter 3 in his magnificent book: *Jesus in India*.

[1648] Contrary to the other gospels ([Mark 16:1-8](#); [Matthew 28:1-8](#); [Luke 24:1-11](#)), our author removes all the other women from the tomb and only has Mary Magdalene come inside.

[1649] Without investigating anything further, Mary flees from the tomb, going to Peter and James (see under [John 21:23](#) for the identity of the disciple whom Jesus was loving) and telling them that the tomb is empty and that **they** have taken him. The question naturally arises as to who **they** are? Knowing that Jesus had survived the cross ordeal, Mary probably went the next day to check up on his recovery and after noticing the empty tomb she panics, thinking that the Jews had discovered that he was still alive and had taken him away.

[1650] The two disciples also would have known of the plan but kept away for fear lest the Jews realise, since they were likely to be the most prominent disciples of Jesus. They listen to Mary and unlike the report of Luke, they believe her and **run** to the tomb to check for themselves, intending to intercept the Jews who may have taken Jesus. James outruns Peter, but when he reaches the tomb, he bends down to see inside and finds that it is empty, it may be that out of grief he does not enter the tomb. Peter does so and sees the clothing of Jesus lying around, and the face towel neatly rolled away separately. Either Jesus was of a very tidy nature, despite having just been crucified, or the young man mentioned in Mark had been occupying his time tidying whilst he waited for Mary. However, it is uncertain why he seems to disappear in John's account above.

[1651] James composes himself and then he, too, enters the tomb and sees that Jesus is not there. Both disciples are then criticised by the author of the gospel for not knowing their own scriptures, which indicated that Jesus was to rise from the dead. However, this criticism is unfair, since there is absolutely no reference anywhere in the Old Testament

to any future saviour figure, let alone the Messiah, dying and resurrecting. See [Mark 8:31-33](#): Jesus Foretells His Passion for more details.

[1652] Not knowing what else to do, the two disciples leave the tomb and return to their homes, most likely to inform the rest of the disciples of the possible sad news that Jesus has been recaptured.

[1653] It is likely that Peter and James left the tomb and took Mary with them for a while, but she may have returned for some reason; possibly to collect Jesus' clothes left behind. In the meantime, the two men mentioned in Luke's Gospel above seem to have gone back into the tomb to collect the clothes as well. They see Mary returning, weeping, and ask her why she's weeping. She in turn complains to them as well, that they (the Jews) have taken Jesus and she does not know where they have taken him.

[1654]

Important Words

κυριε (*kurie*) – Noun, vocative singular, masculine of κυριος (*kurios*). See under [Luke 1:43](#) for the meaning of the word.

[1655]

In John's Gospel, after explaining to the supposed angels earlier that she does not know where Jesus is, Mary then turns her attention to a **gardener** who was behind her. This further points to the fact that the two in the tomb were ordinary men and not angels as depicted by Matthew and Luke, since Mary would not have given up on them so easily and would not have paid attention to an ordinary gardener instead.

The gardener in fact is Jesus, but Mary fails to recognise him and thinks he is simply working close by. When asked why she is weeping, she enquires whether he has seen anyone take Jesus away and if so, to tell her where so she can go and bring him back. If the traditional Christian interpretation is accepted; that the Jesus in front of her was literally resurrected from the dead, then a number of difficulties arise with the above text. Firstly, why was Jesus mistaken for a gardener? Could it be possible that resurrected bodies look like gardeners according to the Bible? Jesus has already answered that question in [Mark 12:25](#); they are to resemble angels in heaven. Yet, Jesus, the son of god looks nothing like an angel, but more like a humble gardener. Furthermore, the above is proof that Jesus was aided by his friends, as one would ask where he "obtained the dress in which he reappeared to Mary Magdalene when she took him for a gardener? He had some clothes on. From where did this clothing come? His own garments had been taken by the soldiers, and the grave clothes were in the tomb" (J.D Shams, *Where did Jesus die?* p.16).

The second difficulty is the pleading of Mary; she wants to know where Jesus is so that she can **take him away**. She could not have meant that she herself would carry the dead body of Jesus, as such a feat would have been impossible for Mary to do on her own.

To resolve both difficulties, a more logical and historical interpretation has to be followed; that Jesus was alive and was standing in front of her all the while. Before her visit, it is likely that he was taken out of the tomb and held by Joseph close by, and seeing Mary return to the tomb, Jesus wished to pay her a visit to give her the glad tidings that he was well. Yet, he could not go out in the open as he was, since he may be recognised and subsequently arrested and crucified again, so he went out in disguise. This is why Mary failed to recognise him.

Mary's request makes sense when it is accepted that she knew that Jesus was alive all along; she pleads with the gardener to tell her where he or the Jews have taken Jesus, so that she may go to him and lead him back to where the disciples were hiding. This is far more likely than her carrying the dead body of Jesus back to the tomb or to the disciples.

[1656] Having played along far enough, Jesus decides to put her out of her misery and calls out her name. He must have had a particular way of calling her, since after he says

her name, she immediately recognises him. In the excitement she rushed to hug him, but he quickly tells her not to, for the obvious reason that he is still recovering from his wounds and a tight hug from a woman would no doubt hurt. The latter part of his statement about him not ascending yet to the Father is nonsensical and purely the words of the author to explain why Jesus did not want Mary to come too close to him. For even if Jesus had not ascended, why could Mary not touch him? Had there been an issue with her touching him due to him not having ascended to the Father, he would not have permitted Thomas to touch him later, either (John 20:27).

[1657] After Jesus appears to Mary outside the tomb he disappears from the scene only to re-enter it rather magically, as depicted by John above, and greets them like he does earlier in Luke 24:34. John adds the fact that the doors were shut due to fear of persecution from the Jews and that even in such circumstances Jesus still appears in their midst. This is likely to be the exaggeration of the author himself; like in Luke it is far more likely that Jesus simply came in from a back door or was let in by the owner of the house to meet some of his disciples who may not have been aware of the plan to save him.

[1658] As in [Luke 24:36-43](#), Jesus first sets about explaining that he is the same person and not a spirit in case some of them thought this. He then shows them his wounds and tells them he is the very same person.

[1659] In this verse, Jesus is now commissioning the disciples; just as God has sent Jesus, he also now sends his disciples. The continuation of the prophetic mission is instituted here; God sent Jesus to preach to the Jews and bring them back to the true teachings of the Torah, and likewise is Jesus sending out his disciples to carry on with this mission. The above would make little sense if the mission of Jesus was to come and die for the sins of mankind as argued by Christians, since that would imply that Jesus was sending out his disciples for the same reason; that they die for the sins of mankind. Thus the mission of Jesus was to preach the message of God to the Jews, and the disciples are now to carry on this mission in Judea, since he was no longer able to do so there.

[1660] Jesus then **breathes** on them the **Holy Spirit**; at this, the reader will expect a miraculous change in their behaviour and perhaps eagerly wait for some exciting tales of them displaying supernatural powers as well. But the Gospel of John ends with something of an anti-climax; in the next chapter the disciples are shown to continue with their previous occupation; fishing. In fact, unlike the magnificent reactions of the disciples recorded in the beginning of Acts when they receive the Holy Spirit, no reaction is recorded in John. The verse seems rather redundant and pointless.

[1661] Perhaps this ability can be the result of receiving the Holy Spirit; yet never is this power of forgiving sins and retaining sins of people illustrated in any of the gospels, or Acts of the Apostles, or any other document in the New Testament. To counter this, many Christians have argued that the power to forgive sins is given through baptism, i.e. the disciples baptise people and through this action the sins of the people are forgiven. However, there is no mention of baptism in the above passage, leaving the reader rather baffled. This in fact may have led many Christian priests, particularly Roman Catholic priests to believe that they, too, had the power to forgive sins.

Much like verse 22, this verse is also likely to have originated from the author himself, since Jesus himself never did forgive the sins of any person. [Mark 2:5](#) is often used as an example of Jesus doing so, but the reader is recommended to read the notes of that verse above.

[1662] The Twin.

[1663] A little later, Thomas appears, but this time Jesus is not with the disciples. The latter rather excitedly tell Thomas that Jesus is fine and that they have seen him, but he doubts them (the phrase *Doubting Thomas* comes from this verse). It is likely that Thomas, too, was unaware of the plan to save Jesus.

[1664] Jesus magically appears in their midst again, much like in verse 19 above.

[1665] Jesus already seems to be aware of the discussion between Thomas and the disciples earlier, and that the only way to convince Thomas is to allow Thomas to feel his wounds. It is likely that Jesus was simply informed by some disciples that Thomas still did not believe, and so Jesus decided to visit them all again ensuring that Thomas was there. He in turn complies with Thomas' wishes and convinces him that he is the same person, bearing the same wounds, and that he did in fact survive the cross.

[1666] When feeling the wounds of Jesus and seeing that he did in fact survive the crucifixion, Thomas exclaims sudden praise to God. This phrase has often been used by Christian interpreters; that Thomas was referring to Jesus as his Lord *and* God, thus indicating that Jesus was a divine being. However, there is a serious difficulty with this interpretation; God in the above reads as ὁ θεός (*ho theos*, with the definite article), thus referring to God, the One God Himself, which is different from John 1:1 where the Word is theos (without the article); in this verse Jesus is expressly entitled *ho theos*. This would imply that Jesus was the One and only true God, which is obviously not the case.

The answer to the difficulty is that Thomas was not referring to Jesus as Lord and God, but it was only an utterance in praise of God. This view is not new and was shared by a fourth century bishop, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who also argued that Thomas was not referring to Jesus when exclaiming the above. Some modern Christians have argued that had Thomas said *My God* out of surprise, he would have been guilty of blasphemy, since he would be taking God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7). This however is a weak argument, since throughout the gospels, the Greek noun for God θεός (*theos*) is used in a variety of situations, e.g. Jesus' proclamation on the cross (Matthew 27:46); John the Baptist uses the noun when stating that God is able to bring children of Abraham from stones (Matthew 3:9); and the high priest urges Jesus to reply in the trial, in the name of God (Matthew 26:63). These are just some examples and none have been accused of blasphemy.

The addition of the Greek definite article along with the context shows that it was just an exclamation of Thomas and not a direct statement that Jesus was Lord and God.

[1667] Thomas is finally rebuked for his lack of faith; it was only through touching and feeling Jesus that he believed that Jesus had survived, but blessed are those who do not see and yet believe!

[1668] It has been argued by many scholars that the original Gospel of John ended with Chapter 20 and the above two verses were its conclusion, as he does admit that there were numerous other signs which Jesus made that were not recorded in this book. But enough has been compiled so that readers may read them and believe; having said that the author would not then continue to iterate more signs, like Chapter 21 does.

[1669] As stated above, Chapter 21 is recognised by most scholars to have been an addition made to the Gospel of John. A number of reasons are put forward. The previous chapter ends with a conclusion, which makes this chapter very out of place. Furthermore, in 20:29, the author adds a saying of Jesus blessing those people who believe without seeing him. It is unlikely that the author would have stated that and then followed it by more appearances of Jesus, thus verse 29 denotes an ending of the appearances of Jesus. Further difficulties arise if Chapter 21 is seen to be original; after being commissioned with the Holy Spirit in 20:22-23, it would seem odd for the disciples to travel back to Galilee and resume their previous occupations. And after seeing Jesus twice already, how could they fail to recognise him again as Chapter 21 indicates? For these reasons, Chapter 21 is often described as an Epilogue or Appendix to John's Gospel.

Scholars aren't in agreement as to who exactly wrote Chapter 21 or why it was appended to the end. Some argue that it was the author of the gospel, who simply appended it to the end of his scroll or gospel, whilst others argue that it was a disciple of the author John who appended it, since its style and vocabulary is very similar to the rest of the

gospel. The reasons put forward are that the writer of this chapter did not want to miss out on important traditions he found later; or that it was for important theological reasons, such as the forgiveness and designation of Peter as heading the apostles after Jesus (the command to feed his sheep in verse 17); or that the author of the entire gospel is an eye-witness (verse 24).

[1670] In this verse, seven of Jesus' disciples are introduced. It may not be entirely surprising that not all of them are mentioned, since the story in this chapter is predominantly about Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved; James.

[1671] The context of the above narrative is awkward; if the story precedes Chapter 20, then it is very strange that after receiving the Holy Spirit and being commissioned to preach (20:22-23) the message of Jesus, the disciples are reported to be sitting around back in Galilee resuming their old professions.

[1672] They fish all night but do not catch anything, and when dawn appears, they suddenly notice Jesus standing on the beach. However, due to the distance some of the disciples fail to recognise him.

[1673] The above cannot be understood as historical, since later in the narrative the author mentions the fact that the disciples were about 200 cubits/100 metres from the shore. Thus it would have required Jesus to shout and for the disciples to shout back over the sound of the sea and waves.

As shown in Luke 5:1-11: The Call of the Disciples, Luke's version is very similar to this passage.. John's account seems more historical than Luke's, showing that something like the above may have occurred after the crucifixion; where Jesus may have met some of the disciples who were fishing in order to feed community members and family.

[1674] This is one of the two disciples who is not named above in verse 2. Why is this disciple not named? Many have thought this to be the author of the gospel, John the son of Zebedee; however, there is no evidence to support this. It is more likely that this is James, the brother and successor of Jesus. As noted under Introduction to the Four Canonical Gospels in the beginning of this book, the author of this gospel was a Pauline, i.e. influenced by the ideas of Paul as against the Petrites, who were headed by James the brother of Jesus. It may have been for this reason that the mention of James is suppressed by the author of this gospel, who saw them as opponents rather than allies.

[1675] Important Words

γυμνός (*gymnos*) – Adjective, nominative singular, masculine meaning: *nude; unclothed; poorly dressed; or without an outer garment* (Friberg, Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 2000). Although the primary meaning of the word is nude, however it is unlikely that Peter fished in the nude since traditional Judaism viewed nudity much like Islam does and being nude in front of others is frowned upon if not prohibited. Furthermore, if Peter was nude, so were the other disciples fishing with him, and there is no mention of them putting on their clothes when they reached the beach.

[1676] When the disciples all land on shore, they notice another miracle; on the sand there is already a charcoal fire with fish and bread. Again, this is difficult to interpret historically, since Jesus earlier asked for fish or something to eat and the disciples had caught nothing. It would have been rather deceiving of him to do so when there was food being prepared already. The explicit reference to a charcoal fire seems strange but may be intentional; there is another reference in John's Gospel of a charcoal fire, in 18:18, where the servants of the priests are warming themselves with a charcoal fire immediately before Peter denies Jesus. Thus the author may be reminding the reader of Peter's denial.

[1677] In this verse, Jesus then asks the disciples to bring the fish which they have just caught, yet this is odd since some fish are already being prepared on the fire. What the author has done, in fact, is to combine two miracle stories. The first is the miracle catch of fish, which seems also to have been used by Luke in his account of The Call of the Disciples above. The other miracle is the surprise food being prepared on the beach by Jesus for his disciples. This is supported by the fact that the fish which are miraculously brought by Jesus, mentioned in verses 9 and 13, are called ὀψάριον (opsarion) and in verses 6, 8 and 11 where the fish are hauled in by the disciples they are referred to as ἰχθὺς (ikhthus). This illustrates how the author has combined two different miracle stories into one, and made a slight mess of it in the process!

[1678] The number of fish caught is interesting, since one hundred and fifty-three fish caught in a net would not threaten to break it, unless they were particularly large fish. However, nowhere in the text does it indicate that anyone counted the number of fish, which in turn has led many to believe that the number of fish is allegorical. Jerome, the fourth century Christian priest argued that the number represented the universality of the Christian mission, since according to him the number of different fish identified by zoologists were one hundred and fifty-three; thus Peter and the other disciples caught all the different kinds of fish in existence, which would indicate that they should catch all the different kinds of people as well. But this interpretation is slightly dated since a lot more than one hundred and fifty-three different kinds of fish species have now been identified.

Numerous mathematical interpretations have also been applied, such as the number being the addition of all the numbers before 17, i.e. 1+2+3+4... which again have often been interpreted in many different ways by traditional Christian interpreters. If the author did have some sort of symbolic significance for the number, it was hidden very well, since the sheer number of interpretations for the number is vast and conflicting.

[1679] The disciples are then invited to breakfast by Jesus; they come and join him but none dare to ask who he is, knowing already that it is him. This in turn makes little sense, if the disciples knew it was Jesus, why would they want to ask him? It may be that they wanted confirmation from Jesus himself, yet this again seems rather odd since these are the same disciples who followed Jesus for years; surely they could have spoken to him.

[1680] This is the third time Jesus appears to the disciples according to the Gospel of John. Prior to this, Jesus met the disciples twice behind closed doors: once whilst Thomas was absent: and a second time whilst he was present. However, this does not take into account the other gospels where Jesus appears to the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), and on a Mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20), thus showing the number of appearances to be at least five.

[1681] The three questioning dialogues between Jesus and Peter have often been argued to represent the three denials of Peter earlier in the gospel. However, there is no mention of any denial of Peter, or any guilt of Peter for having denied Jesus three times. Indeed Peter was in a difficult position and his intentions were pure when he did deny Jesus (see under [John 18:13-27](#): Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Peter's Denial) for more details). If Jesus did speak to Peter, he may simply have wanted to reinforce Peter's high position among the disciples by having the instruction to take care of the community of Jesus repeated three times along with Peter affirming his role numerous times.

[1682] This and the previous verse have proven to be very difficult to interpret. To begin with it is rather incomprehensible for someone to take a poor old man or woman to places where they do not wish to go. Thus it is likely that Jesus is speaking of death, and not any man's death but Peter's himself. According to Christian tradition, Peter was crucified as well, thus pointing to his hands being stretched and being led to where he does not wish to go. This is likely to be the words of the author himself, obviously writing after Peter was put to death and wanting to make it into a prophecy of Jesus, much like the three-time denial.

[1683] Since this gospel was written seventy or more years after Jesus' departure and most likely at a time when most if not all the disciples had passed away, the author John

wished to correct the erroneous view that Jesus' second coming, ushering the kingdom of heaven, would occur within the lifetime of the disciples according to Mark. Since this did not happen, it was natural for John to write verse 23 to explain it so. The Markan view that it would happen within the lifetime of Jesus is nowhere mentioned and attested to in the Gospel of John. Therefore, did Jesus really say it or not? According to Mark, yes, and it was a prophecy which failed to be fulfilled, but according to John, Jesus never did and thus saved himself the embarrassment of an unfulfilled prophecy.

[1684] It has been argued by many scholars that the above was an insertion or comment made by the author in order to get priority over the other gospels, since the Gospel of John was written by an eye-witness himself, not just by authors who knew eye-witnesses or had access to records by them. Thus the above attribution is or was appended to the end of the gospel to give it more credibility and wider acceptance.

The latter part of the verse is rather awkward; after stating that this is the Beloved **Disciple** and that **he wrote these things** down, the author of the gospel then refers to him in the third person, informing the readers that his testimony is true. This does not sound like the author of the gospel, how could it be? He refers to the disciples as **he**, in the third person. There is a clear differentiation.

[1685] Like the above, this verse is also an addition, repeating the statement of 20:30. The final statement that the whole world would not be big enough to contain a library of the actions and works of Jesus may be a slight exaggeration, for how much could one write about the life of a man's activity of three years? However, this was a typical technique to end works in ancient times, both among Greeks and Jews and thus should not be read literally.

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